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Teaching for a Changing World:
The Graduates of Bank Street College of Education

**The Threads They Follow:
Bank Street Teachers in a Changing World**

By Ira Lit and Linda Darling-Hammond
with Eileen Horng, Sam Intrator, Soyoung Park, Jon Snyder, and Xinhua Zheng





This report is one of five publications from the larger study entitled
Teaching for a Changing World: The Graduates of Bank Street College of Education
Linda Darling-Hammond and Ira Lit, principal investigators

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The **Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE)** was founded in 2008 to address issues of educational opportunity, access, and equity in the United States and internationally. SCOPE engages faculty from across Stanford University and from other universities to work on a shared agenda of research, policy analysis, educational practice, and dissemination of ideas to improve quality and equality of education from early childhood through college. More information about SCOPE is available at <https://edpolicy.stanford.edu>.

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The Way It Is

There's a thread you follow. It goes among
things that change. But it doesn't change.
People wonder about what you are pursuing.
You have to explain about the thread.
But it is hard for others to see.
While you hold it you can't get lost.

—William Stafford

Executive Summary

I found Bank Street to be an outstanding institution for educating teachers, far exceeding the common perceptions about teacher training. They are very strongly focused on the child's developmental level, and how to engage a child with meaningful, age-appropriate, firsthand experiences and curriculum.

—Bank Street graduate

The Bank Street College of Education is both a historical and contemporary institution of progressive education.

Historical, in that it has its roots in the Progressive Era movement. It was founded in 1916 as The Bureau of Educational Experiments by educator Lucy Sprague Mitchell, a compatriot of John Dewey and others influential in the progressive education movement of that time. Mitchell and her colleagues concluded that building a new kind of educational system was essential to building a better, more rational, more humane world.

Contemporary, as the college continues to promote an enlightened orientation to education that seeks to ground progressive ideals in the modern contexts of schooling and related policies. A century after its founding, Bank Street College of Education continues a long tradition of providing educational opportunities with a progressive orientation to children and educators through a wide range of programs in its well-regarded School for Children and Graduate School of Education.

The Bank Street College Graduate School of Education offers internationally renowned master's level teacher certification programs from early childhood through middle grades with a number of specializations, programs, and pathways. The graduate school also offers several additional programs, including leader-

The mission of Bank Street College is to improve the education of children and their teachers by applying to the education process all available knowledge about learning and growth, and by connecting teaching and learning meaningfully to the outside world. In so doing, we seek to strengthen not only individuals, but the community as well, including family, school, and the larger society in which adults and children, in all their diversity, interact and learn. We see in education the opportunity to build a better society.

(Bank Street College of Education,
2014e)

ship, museum education, literacy, and child life. Its graduates serve in a multitude of schools and other organizations in and beyond the New York metropolitan area. Bank Street College and its graduates have been responsible for significant reforms of schooling in a number of schools where Bank Street–prepared teachers and principals congregate.

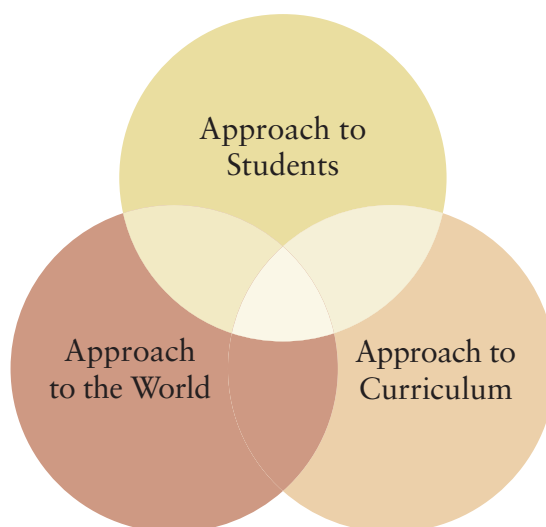
This report focuses on graduates of Bank Street College Graduate School of Education teacher certification programs, by examining the quality of their preparation, their teaching practices upon graduation, and the influence they have on their students' learning. It also looks at the cumulative effects of school-wide practices at schools supportive of the Bank Street approach (described below). The results conveyed here are based on the combined analyses of extensive surveys of graduates and employers; large-scale administrative data related to the impact of program graduates on pupil learning in New York City public schools; in-depth classroom and school observations; and interviews of graduates, principals, and college faculty.

In order to comprehend and evaluate the impact of a robust, multifaceted enterprise such as teacher education, we used a multipronged research approach, as noted above. With this expanse of evaluation tools, we were able to:

1. Explore the *professional trajectories* of graduates of Bank Street College teacher certification programs, including job placement and retention;
2. Investigate the *preparedness* of graduates of Bank Street College teacher certification programs, including their perceptions of the quality of preparation for various aspects of teaching, their satisfaction with their preparation, and their sense of efficacy in comparison to other teachers in New York State;
3. Examine the *effectiveness* of classroom teachers prepared at Bank Street College and working in New York City public schools, as measured by pupil learning gains and by principals' assessments of their competence; and
4. Document and describe in vivid detail the *classroom practices* of Bank Street College graduates, accounting for the relationship among context, practice, and student opportunities for learning at a set of select schools with a significant Bank Street presence.

The conceptual lens for this project was the **Bank Street developmental-interaction approach**, an approach to teaching, learning, and teacher development that can trace its roots to a Progressive Era movement that began in the early 20th century.

Conceived and developed by Mitchell and her colleagues nearly a century ago, the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach has been cultivated and refined over the years. This conception of teaching and learning has come to be known as the “developmental-interaction approach,” or more popularly, as the “Bank Street approach.” To guide our analysis, we distilled the developmental-interaction approach to an interrelated and integrated *approach to students, approach to curriculum, and approach to the world*, which served as an analytical frame for this project.



The results of these many efforts comprise the comprehensive report, *Teaching for a Changing World: The Graduates of Bank Street College of Education*, which has five publications, including this study:

- *The Threads They Follow: Bank Street Teachers in a Changing World*
- *The Preparation, Professional Pathways, and Effectiveness of Bank Street Graduates*
- *Learning to Play, Playing to Learn: The Bank Street Developmental-Interaction Approach in Liliana’s Kindergarten Classroom*
- *Artful Teaching and Learning: The Bank Street Developmental-Interaction Approach at Midtown West School*
- *A School Growing Roots: The Bank Street Developmental-Interaction Approach at Community Roots Charter School*

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Summary Of Findings

Bank Street College of Education was by far the best thing I ever did for myself as both a learner and a teacher. It made me the teacher I am today. The courses and instructors were unparalleled in their knowledge and understanding of child development and curriculum development.

—Bank Street graduate

Our multipronged approach to evaluation resulted in a noteworthy range of findings, including much to challenge conventional views of teacher education. In looking at graduates of Bank Street College Graduate School of Education teacher certification programs and schools supportive of the Bank Street approach we found:

- Graduates stay in teaching and take on a variety of educational leadership roles.
- Graduates feel exceptionally well prepared across subject-matter areas, especially in social studies and English language arts.
- Graduates report feeling well prepared to meet the needs of diverse students.
- Employers are enthusiastic about hiring program graduates because of the sophisticated insights and skills they bring to the classroom.
- Learning gains for students of Bank Street graduates on value-added measures from standardized test scores, with all of the necessary caveats, are comparable to those of other teachers, with a slight edge in English language arts for students taught by experienced Bank Street teachers.
- Graduates offer an engaging, developmentally meaningful, and inquiry-oriented curriculum.
- Graduates engage in learner- and learning-centered practices that support a wide range of students.

- Graduates' teaching practice is oriented around extended, integrated social studies units that serve as a focal point of the curriculum, and includes extensive, well-considered field trips to connect classroom learning to the broader community.
- Students of graduates are happily and deeply engaged in robust and meaningful learning experiences.
- Evidence of children's capacities to read, write, analyze, problem-solve, inquire, and think creatively extends far beyond what is seen in many classrooms today.
- In schools that are organized around the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach, we saw joyful, productive classrooms where students engage in experiential learning, investigate the natural and social world, learn to collaborate and communicate, and are developing the 21st-century skills that are much talked about in today's reform conversations.

In sum, graduates are grateful for the preparation they have received and feel a deep responsibility to help develop these conditions for learning wherever they can.

This report organizes detailed descriptions of findings around four key questions, summarized below.

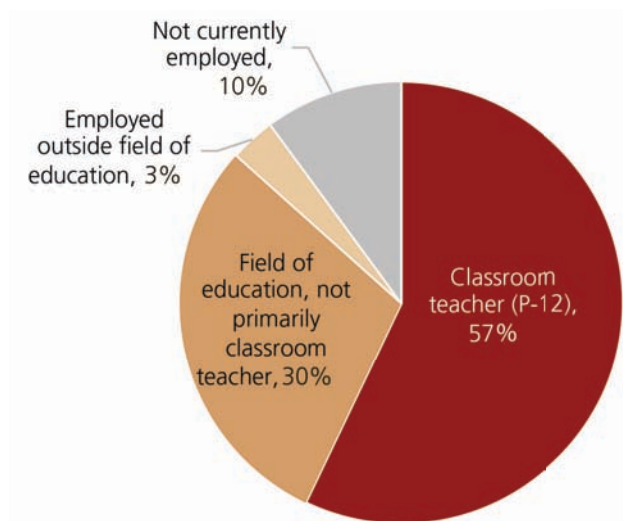
Where are Bank Street graduates now?

Retention rates among teachers are an important and closely scrutinized outcome within the profession. Research indicates that more effective teachers are more likely to stay in the profession and that teachers gain in effectiveness with experience (Boyd et al., 2010; Kraft & Papay, 2014; Nye et al, 2004; Rockoff, 2004). To examine the professional trajectories of graduates of Bank Street College teacher certification programs, we surveyed all graduates from 2000 through 2012 along with a comparison sample of other teachers in New York state and found the following:

- Bank Street graduates enter and remain in the field of education at high rates: 87% of respondents to our Teaching Program Survey indicate that their primary position is in the field of education, with 57% working as P–12 classroom teachers. Among the five most recent cohorts surveyed, 68% of graduates report positions as classroom teachers, rates that surpass national and local averages for teachers in urban communities. Many graduates from older cohorts have moved from classroom teaching to other school positions, such as administration or support personnel, but have remained in the field of education.

- Bank Street graduates are most commonly employed in public and private schools in New York City and tend to teach pre-school and early elementary school grades. Of the Bank Street graduates who were currently teaching when they took the survey, 66% report teaching in New York City—54% of whom were at private schools in the city (including a large number in private preschools, which was the largest early childhood sector at the time of the survey), 33% at New York City Department of Education public non-charter schools, and 11% at public charter schools. At least 40% of graduates have taught for at least some period of their career in New York City public schools. Just over half report currently teaching at a private school (including early childhood centers), while 11% report working in a charter school.

Bank Street Teaching Program Graduates (2000–2012): Primary Employment



- Additionally, Bank Street graduates are professionally active. Compared to a random sample of New York State teachers (kindergarten through grade 8), Bank Street graduates are more likely to have attended a professional conference, planned or conducted professional development, participated in a school reform or improvement committee, and participated in starting or leading a new school or program.

How do Bank Street graduates evaluate the quality of their preparation?

- Overall, Bank Street graduates rate their preparation very highly; 87% of the respondents report that their teacher preparation program was “effective” or “very effective,” as compared to 66% of the comparison teachers.
- When asked about the utility of specific aspects of their preparation program in preparing them as a teacher, Bank Street graduates are significantly more likely than comparison teachers to report that program coursework (83% vs. 65%), advisement/supervisory sup-

port (82% vs. 67%), and the caliber of their course instructors (88% vs. 75%) were “helpful” or “very helpful” in preparing them as teachers. Both Bank Street graduates and comparison teachers rate the importance of their field experiences highly (87% for both).

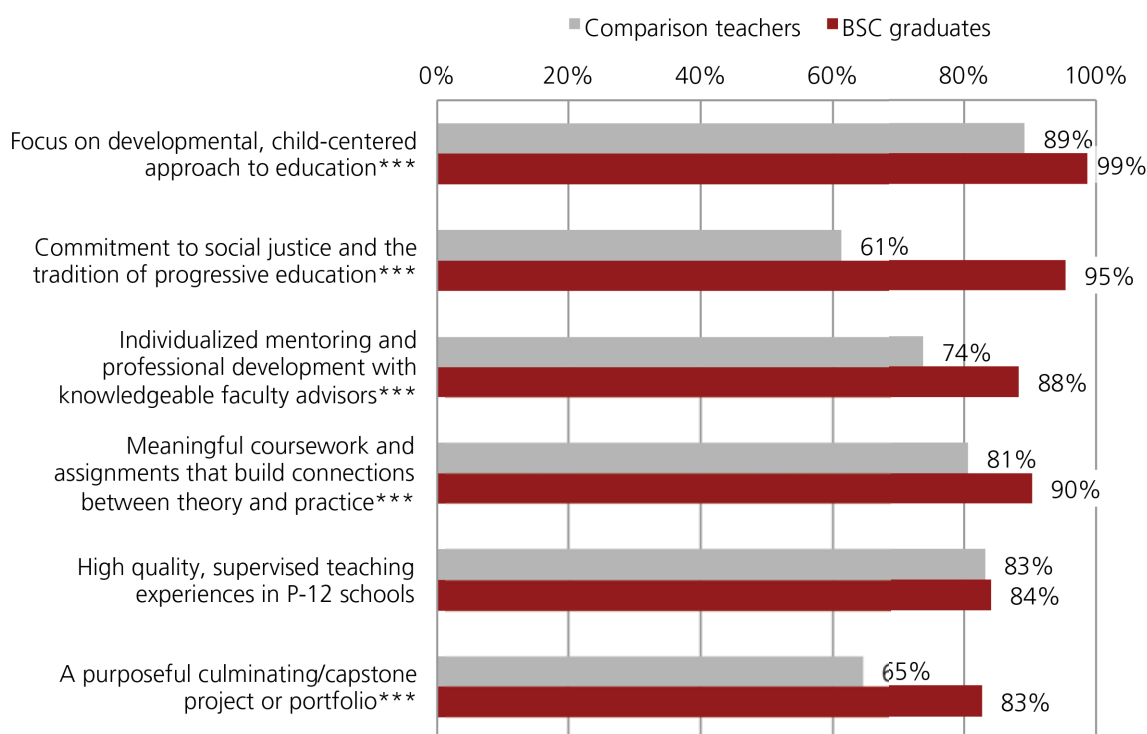
- Bank Street graduates also rate the quality and depth of field experiences and advisement highly. A key feature of Bank Street programs is the extended fieldwork experience, supported by an intensive small group advisory. Perhaps, then, it is unsurprising that Bank Street graduates were much more likely to have spent an extensive amount of time in supervised fieldwork compared to the teachers in our comparison sample. More than half of the Bank Street graduates report spending over 720 hours (approximately equivalent to 120 six-hour days or 24 weeks) in a classroom placement; in contrast, only 13% of the comparison teachers said the same. Conversely, almost 70% of the comparison teachers spent fewer than 480 hours (approximately equivalent to 80 days or 16 weeks) in supervised fieldwork, whereas less than a third of the Bank Street graduates reported the same.
- Our results also suggest that to a significant degree, graduates found that their educational experiences at the college successfully aligned with Bank Street’s stated mission. In comparison to other teacher preparation programs, Bank Street is significantly more likely to be characterized by graduates as having a focus on a developmental, child-centered approach to education (99% vs. 89% of other program graduates); a commitment to social justice and the tradition of progressive education (95% vs. 61%); individualized mentoring and professional development with knowledgeable faculty advisors (88% vs. 74%); meaningful coursework and assignments that build connections between theory and practice (90% vs. 81%); and a purposeful culminating/capstone project or portfolio (83% vs. 65%). Bank Street graduates strongly agreed, as did the comparison teachers, that they received high-quality, supervised teaching experiences (84% and 83% respectively).

Every working day of my life I am grateful for the progressive model taught at Bank Street. As an early interventionist, my education has been particularly useful as I engage with very young children and their parents—always remembering to address “the whole child” and working from a framework of the child’s/family’s strengths.

—Bank Street graduate

In sum, Bank Street graduates lauded the quality and impact of their preparatory experiences at the college.

Percentages of Bank Street Graduates and Comparison Teachers Who Responded “Somewhat Agree” or “Strongly Agree” to Survey Question: *To what extent do you agree that the following features characterized your teacher preparation program?*



Note. Significance of comparison of item means of Bank Street College graduates versus comparison teachers indicated next to item: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Do Bank Street graduates demonstrate qualities of effective teachers?

Overall, I have found Bank Street students to be extremely insightful and reflective. They are open to and actively engage in continued learning. They are dedicated professionals who take their commitment to education and young children seriously.

—Employer

In Powerful Teacher Education: Lessons from Exemplary Programs, Darling-Hammond (2006) identified 27 teaching activities that are important for teacher effectiveness and that characterize teachers who engage in skillful, learner-centered practice. The activities are divided into five broad categories: *engaging and supporting students in learning; assessing student learning; planning instruction and designing learning experiences for students; creating and maintaining effective environments for student learning; and working as a professional educator*. Nearly across the board, Bank Street graduates rated their preparation to engage in these teaching activities significantly higher than the comparison teachers.

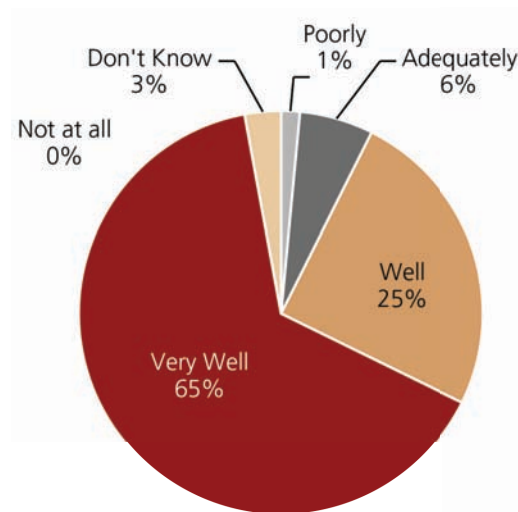
Some dimensions stand out as particularly strong areas of preparation for the Bank Street graduates. For example, over 85% of the graduates report they were “well” or “very well” prepared to engage in each of the following as a teacher:

- Plan instruction based on how children and adolescents develop and learn;
- Relate classroom learning to the real world;
- Develop curriculum that builds on students’ experiences, interest, and abilities;
- Use knowledge of learning, subject matter, curriculum, and student development to plan instruction; and
- Develop a classroom environment that promotes social/emotional development and group responsibility.

In some areas the differences with comparison teachers were particularly stark:

- For example, 74% of Bank Street graduates indicate that they were “well” or “very well” prepared to teach students from diverse ethnic, racial, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds, as compared to only 37% of the comparison teachers.
- Similarly, 86% of Bank Street graduates indicate they were “well” or “very well” prepared to develop curriculum that builds on students’ experiences, interest, and abilities, as compared to only 54% of the comparison teachers.
- Finally, 80% of Bank Street graduates noted they were “well” or “very well” prepared to provide a rationale for their teaching decisions to students, parents, and colleagues, as compared to only 47% of comparison teachers.

Responses of Employers to Survey
Question: Overall, how well prepared do you think Bank Street College graduates are as teachers?



Employer Satisfaction and Analysis of Pupil Learning Gains

We appraised the effectiveness of Bank Street graduates, in part, by asking employers (generally school principals) to evaluate the quality of the graduates' preparation. We also undertook an extensive analysis of administrative data from the New York City Department of Education in an attempt to deduce contributions of Bank Street graduates to pupil achievement, as measured by test score gains on standardized assessments in English language arts and math.

- Overwhelmingly, employers view Bank Street graduates very favorably, both overall and in specific aspects of teaching; 90% of the respondents think that Bank Street graduates are “well” or “very well” prepared as teachers.
- Across the same categories of effective teaching skills and knowledge noted above, principals rated Bank Street graduates “well” or “very well” prepared as compared with other teachers with whom they have worked. In 19 of the 27 categories, 80% or more of employers rated Bank Street graduates as performing “well” or “very well” as compared with other teachers.
- On value-added measures from standardized test scores, with all of the necessary caveats, we found learning gains for students of Bank Street graduates comparable to those of other teachers, with a slight edge in English language arts for students taught by experienced Bank Street teachers.
- In addition to teacher experience, the other teacher variable in our models found to have significant influence on student achievement was teacher certification. After controlling for student characteristics, student attendance, and prior achievement, we found that in both English language arts and math, students taught by teachers with permanent or professional certificates significantly outperformed those taught by teachers with provisional or initial certificates.



Bank Street College students/graduates are generally very well prepared, and work effectively within our setting. They have a good developmental understanding of the students, frame curriculum that is interdisciplinary in nature and which takes into consideration the students' learning styles, life experiences and social–emotional development. Their training and core values as educators resonate with our school's philosophy, which is rooted in progressive education. They have a fundamental understanding of what it means to educate “the whole child,” and value an experiential approach to learning. They have been trained well in assessing outcomes and in differentiating instruction appropriately.

—New York City principal

Crosscutting Themes: Influences of Bank Street preparation and the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach

In this summary report, we brought together the results of our surveys, interviews, and case studies, with an emphasis on describing in rich detail the Bank Street approach in action in the schools and classrooms of Bank Street graduates. The following crosscutting themes illustrate how the preparatory experiences and classroom practices of graduates from Bank Street teacher preparation programs are connected, as well as informed and animated by the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach.

In the report, we identify and describe in richly detailed vignettes the following thematic threads in the work of Bank Street graduates:

- **An approach to students** with an emphasis on play and child development, observation and reflection, meetings and conferences, process-orientated learning, and students as young scholars;
- **An approach to curriculum** with an emphasis on the centrality of integrated social studies, engaging with outside-of-school environments through purposeful field trips, arts infusion, and content learning through collaborative inquiry; and
- **An approach to the world** with an emphasis on connections to family and fostering community, commitment to diversity and inclusivity, teacher professionalism and collaboration, and teaching for the public good.

The unfolding work of reorienting and reinvigorating the Bank Street approach in conversation and the connection with the needs of local contexts were abundantly evident in the classrooms and schools of the Bank Street graduates and their colleagues at Midtown West School, Brooklyn New School, and Community Roots Charter School, the Bank Street–affiliated schools that were the subject of our extended case studies.

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I truly loved my time at Bank Street. The coursework, depth and length of the student teaching placements (I had three excellent placements totaling a full year), and the advisory were all rich experiences that I continue to draw on. I loved the intense support of my advisor and the collegiality of both my advisory group and my classmates during coursework. As I have gone on to teach in different states, countries, and in a variety of different schools, it has become clear to me how well Bank Street prepared me for my professional life and what a stand-out it is in the world of teacher preparation programs (which is why I chose it from the get-go). So few of my colleagues report experiencing anything close to it in their teacher preparation programs. I am incredibly grateful to Bank Street for helping shape my educational philosophy and encourage my reflectiveness and creativity.

—Bank Street graduate

Conclusion

Bank Street is unique in teacher preparation programs for the integrity of the practice of its own philosophy: that is, experience-based learning is lifelong learning, and reflection with peers and guides/mentors is key in personal development as a teacher. Wherever I have taught, it is the Bank Street graduates who were my colleagues that were the best team players, most interested in participating in collaborative projects, and most thoughtful about child development and individual learning. I cannot say enough about the value of a Bank Street education.

—Bank Street graduate

Nearly a century ago, Lucy Sprague Mitchell wrote a credo envisioning what Bank Street could and should be. While Bank Street has naturally changed with the times, in our follow-up studies of graduates of Bank Street's teacher preparation programs, we found that what lies at the heart of this institution and the work of its graduates has remained remarkably consistent with this credo.

What potentialities in human beings—children, teachers, and ourselves—do we want to see develop?

- A zest for living that comes from taking in the world with all five senses alert
- Lively intellectual curiosities that turn the world into an exciting laboratory and keep one ever a learner
- Flexibility when confronted with change and ability to relinquish patterns that no longer fit the present
- The courage to work, unafraid and efficiently, in a world of new needs, new problems, and new ideas
- Gentleness combined with justice in passing judgments on other human beings
- Sensitivity, not only to the external formal rights of the "other fellow," but to him as another human being seeking a good life through his own standards
- A striving to live democratically, in and out of schools, as the best way to advance our concept of democracy

Our credo demands ethical standards as well as scientific attitudes. Our work is based on the faith that human beings can improve the society they have created (as cited in Bank Street College of Education, 2014e).

Project Overview

Preface

The Bank Street College Graduate School of Education offers internationally renowned master's level teacher certification programs from early childhood through middle grades with a number of specializations, programs, and pathways. The graduate school also offers several additional programs, including leadership, museum education, literacy, and child life. Its graduates serve in a multitude of schools and other organizations in and beyond the New York metropolitan area. Bank Street College and its graduates have been responsible for significant reforms of schooling in a number of schools where Bank Street-prepared teachers and principals congregate.

In May 2012, Bank Street College contracted with the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE) to design and implement an independent, multiyear, multiphase study examining the preparation, practices, and effectiveness of graduates of Bank Street College teacher certification programs who graduated between 2002 and 2012.

This study has allowed us to explore the outcomes of a unique, longstanding institution of teacher preparation that has a clear vision of its pedagogical goals and strategies. The Bank Street developmental-interaction approach—identified by many in the field as the “Bank Street approach” or the “Bank Street way”—promotes progressive, developmentally grounded education that places children at the center and their learning at the fore of the teacher’s consciousness. Bank Street is also known for helping teachers learn how to focus on the social context of children and their families, and support individual approaches to learning, including those of students with notable learning differences. Bank Street is further known for its careful integration of intense and well-planned student teaching with coursework that is both theoretically rich and deeply practical.

Bank Street commissioning this study is a sign of its institutional reflectiveness and the importance that the organization places on evaluating and continually improving its work. In order to comprehend and evaluate the impact of a robust, multifaceted enterprise such as teacher education, we used a multipronged approach that included interviews of college faculty; extensive surveys of graduates, comparison teachers, and employers; extended observations and interviews in support of classroom and school-level case studies; and evaluation of pupil learning gains. Our focus in this study is primarily comparative and descriptive. Through surveys of graduates

and employers, we identified programmatic foci and strengths. Via case studies of classrooms and schools that exemplified the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach, we built detailed descriptive case studies of this work in practice.

With this expanse of tools, we were able to develop a rich picture of the outcomes and contributions of Bank Street's graduate teaching programs to the learning and teaching of its graduates and their students. On conventional test measures, with all of the necessary caveats, we found gains of students of Bank Street graduates comparable to those of other teachers, with a slight edge in English language arts for students taught by experienced Bank Street teachers. Beyond this limited measure, we found much to challenge conventional views of teacher education, including:

- graduates who feel exceptionally well prepared across subject-matter areas, especially in social studies and English language arts,
- graduates who stay in teaching at high rates and are professionally active,
- employers who are delighted to hire program graduates because of the sophisticated insights and skills they bring to the classroom,
- students of graduates who are happily and deeply engaged in robust learning experiences, and
- evidence of children's capacities to read, write, analyze, problem-solve, inquire, and think creatively that extend far beyond what is seen in many classrooms today.

Neither Bank Street nor its graduates (nor the authors of this study) are perfect. In fact, a hallmark of the college and its graduates is the emphasis on and desire to continually strive to improve. Thus what we describe is not the perfection of an approach to teacher preparation or teaching practice (nor is it perfectly portrayed) but rather an intellectually honest rendering of the data we collected, along with its advantages and limitations. While we trust that the college, and the readers, will use these descriptions and analyses to generate critique and ideas for improvement, that was not the function of this study.

We hope that drawing upon a range of assessment tools to explore the outcomes and impact of a rich approach to teacher preparation will be helpful to researchers and practitioners in the field of teaching and teacher education, as well as to school and policy leaders who are interested in creating developmentally supportive environments for equitable and empowering learning.

Liliana: Putting the Bank Street Developmental-Interaction Approach to Work

“What are you working on?” Bank Street alumna and kindergarten teacher Liliana¹ gasps in amazement as she looks at the tall structure Ada and Katie are building in the block area.

“We’re building a hospital!” Ada whips her blond ponytail around as she turns to face Liliana with excitement.

“Yeah,” Katie continues, “And we named it Methodist Hospital because we both went there when we got hurt.”

“When you got hurt?” Liliana asks, crinkling her forehead in concern.

“When we got hurt outside,” Katie says.

“Oh yes, that’s right!” Liliana nods in understanding.

The girls turn back to their structure and continue to build. There are different compartments for the various rooms in the hospital. So far, the girls have made a sign-in room, a surgery room, a wheelchair room, and a waiting room.

After watching the girls for a few moments, Liliana walks over to some shelves in the back of the room. She pulls out a clear pocket folder and takes out an envelope full of students’ headshots. As she flips through the stack of photos, Liliana pulls out pictures of Ada and Katie. She then cuts out the girls’ heads in the photos and grabs two cylindrical blocks from the shelves. Ada and Katie pause for a moment to see what Liliana is doing, but then proceed to build their hospital taller and wider. Liliana tapes Ada and Katie’s headshots to the cylindrical blocks. She then comes over to the girls and tells them that she made some blocks for them so that they can be part of the hospital too. Ada and Katie beam at their teacher as they thank her. Taking her cylinder from Liliana, Ada rests the block on a rectangular bed in the surgical room, while Katie places hers in the waiting room of the hospital.

Liliana earned a master’s degree in early childhood special and general education from Bank Street College, and the college’s developmental-interaction approach permeates her teaching practice. She is a kindergarten teacher in a full inclusion (joint general and special education) classroom at the Brooklyn New School in New York, a school with a long history of close ties to Bank Street (See “Liliana: A Bank Street Graduate in Action,” page 151).

¹ With permission, this report identifies the school and school administrators by their actual names; teachers and students are referenced via pseudonyms.

Liliana's active and careful facilitative participation in Ada and Katie's engagement in block-building are regarded as a necessary component of children's play and learning in the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach. Franklin (2000) explains that the founders of Bank Street College championed the view that

to maximize play as an arena for the child's learning requires the teacher's participation. This should not be taken to mean that the teacher plays with the child, as some educators would have it. Rather, the teacher...*selects* and *arranges* the materials for play available in the classroom and outdoor play space...[,] *plans experiences* that provide material for the children's dramatic scenarios...[, and] helps the children to frame their play. (p. 51)

It is therefore important that the teacher take on an active role in supporting children's growth through play. Play in Liliana's classroom is intentional in its focus on the whole child and requires much planning, structure, and careful thought about individual students. By giving Ada and Katie cylindrical blocks with the girls' faces attached to them, Liliana arranges the materials and plans an experience for the girls to include their own personal narratives into block building.

Liliana explains that she got the idea to place students' pictures onto blocks from the "block building" course she took at Bank Street. In that class, all of the graduate students also built large structures and included themselves in the block creation. Inserting oneself into block building helps with the development of social scripts. "The children can narrate stories with the blocks and put themselves in the scenarios," Liliana noted. "They can then revisit the structures and the stories that they're constructing." For Ada and Katie, they are able to communicate about their experiences in Methodist Hospital by inserting themselves into their block-building narrative. By doing so, these young builders can process meaningful, challenging experiences in order to heal from past hurts and develop their emotional and cognitive health.

Block building is an integral component of two foundational early childhood courses at Bank Street College: Curriculum in Early Childhood Education (Grades N–3) and Curriculum in Early Childhood Education: Developing Learning Environments and Experiences for Children of Diverse Backgrounds and Abilities. Additionally, the college offers several other courses that incorporate the utility of block building, dramatic play, and other modalities of utilizing play to support learning and development as part of their graduate school, professional development, and continuing professional studies curricula (Bank Street College of Education, 2014b). Those in the early childhood program learn that block building and other playful learning opportunities offers a space where, in the words of Bank Street founder's founder, Lucy Sprague Mitchell:

everything that comes into [children's] little hands begins to move, to toot, to chug, to bark. The images gathered in firsthand experiences

are getting into action. The relationships discovered through living in a particular environment are being played back. Indeed, that is what play at this stage is—a reliving of experiences. (Mitchell, 1934/2001, p. 13)

Liliana grabs a red Moleskine notebook and a pencil. She carries these tools with her regularly to take careful observational notes and recordings of her students in order to support her planning. She sits down by the block area and takes notes on the girls. She continues to observe Ada and Katie as they build their hospital. Jermaine, a small boy in a blue collared shirt, walks over to the blocks and starts to pace nearby. He seems to be looking for a way to enter the girls' play. Liliana walks over to him and whispers in his ear. Jermaine then faces Ada and asks, "How can I help?"

Ada and Katie look around their structure. Katie passes Jermaine a rectangular block and responds, "Here, you can make a parking lot."

"Great idea!" Liliana interjects. "Jermaine, think about what blocks you'll need to make a parking lot." He pauses for a moment, staring at the shelf full of blocks. Jermaine then walks over to the shelf and starts pulling out cylindrical, triangular, and rectangular blocks to begin building.

After observing Jermaine trying to enter Ada and Katie's play, Liliana steps in to give him some guidance on how he can do so. She scaffolds for Jermaine the linguistic tools he needs to enter the play, and then helps him sustain his participation by prompting him to consider what blocks he might need to build a parking lot. Liliana supports Jermaine's development of social and problem-solving skills during this moment of play. Once she facilitates entry, however, Liliana steps back again so that the children can have the freedom to explore their worlds and their selves, building independence and interdependence with just the right level of support and intervention by their teacher to foster their growth and development.

Block building is one of the activities happening in the classroom early in the day during *work time*, when students engage in playful activities carefully designed to foster their holistic development, including cognitive, physical, and social-emotional. Work time provides students with a wide range of choices for engagement and learning each day, including block building, math games, dramatic play, reading and writing, and much more.

As work time starts to come to a close, Liliana goes over to the group once more and asks the builders if they want to clean up their hospital or would rather leave it to keep working on it tomorrow.

"We want to leave it," Ada says, looking at her peers who nod in agreement.

“How could we tell everyone that we’re coming back to this tomorrow?” Liliana asks the children.

Ada, Katie, and Jermaine look at each other with puzzled expressions. “Maybe we could make signs! And Ada could tell everyone,” Katie suggests.

“Let’s tell together,” Ada says.

“Ok, you have one minute to make a sign that lets everyone else know that you’re leaving the blocks,” Liliana smiles to the group and then signals for the entire class to quiet down and look at her.

Liliana waits until all of the students freeze in attention before explaining that the block-building group has an announcement to make. Ada, Katie, and Jermaine stand up and step out of the block area. They tell the class that they are going to continue building their hospital tomorrow.

Liliana scans the room and says to the children, “Should we put their blocks away?”

A chorus of students replies, “No!”

“Because they’re still building it,” Jessie offers as she pushes up her glasses and squints to examine the block structure standing several feet to her right. Liliana then prompts the class to begin cleaning up their work time stations.

The block builders go over to a table with paper, pencils, and tape at hand. They begin making signs that have the word “STOP” written above a pair of eyes that seem to tell others to look before they move any farther. When they are finished making their signs, Ada, Katie, and Jermaine tape them all around their block structure. The next day, they will continue to construct their elaborate hospital, which will eventually have cars in the parking lot, patients getting X-rays and casts in the X-ray room, doctors standing in the surgery room, and patients, grouped according to their age, sitting in the waiting rooms.

For the children in Liliana’s class, play provides numerous social and academic learning opportunities. Liliana also structures play as an occasion for students to grow as citizens in a classroom community. Liliana’s class and the range of activities she designs offer a welcoming and safe space for her students to test and extend their knowledge, develop academic and interpersonal skills, and practice both independence and interdependence. The block builders in Liliana’s class, for example, experiment with design, engineering, and physics; interact with each other to share their personal stories; explore other possible narratives and perspectives; and learn a sense of responsibility for their creations in collaboration with others. Other activities offer similar opportunities: dramatic play, the arts, writing, extended studies,

field trips, and more. Moreover, Liliana is helping students learn to collectively fashion a shared community they can all be comfortable and successful in and develop the skills necessary to do so. Mitchell (1934/2001) describes the importance of play for expression and growth in young learners:

Kindergarten and first graders express themselves through play. Not play which is merely a pastime, but play which is constructive and leads through progressive stages of relationship-thinking. This kind of play needs free or raw materials which can take the impress of the user. The best of all adaptable materials seems to be blocks. (p. 16)

Children's block creations therefore have deep value, seen in the way Liliana's students long to preserve their structure. The blocks have symbolic form, giving the students a medium for:

- “imagining what might be, as well as for organizing and consolidating knowledge”;
- relating with their environment as “active inquirer[s]” who “must be provided with materials carefully selected and arranged to encourage the exploration and discovery that lead to genuine understanding”; and
- encouraging interpersonal collaboration and negotiation, from “learning to share materials, to collaborative building and the planning and enactment of extended dramas,” so children are “encouraged to work cooperatively and to see themselves not only as individuals but as members of a group” (Franklin, 2000, p. 54).

Play, through blocks and other media, is critical to students' learning—intellectually, socially, and emotionally.

Liliana's preparation at Bank Street taught her that play is central to children's intellectual and social growth, a concept her experience as a classroom teacher has reinforced. It is through fostering play that she feels she can reach her personal goals as a teacher: to foster her students' social, emotional, physical, academic, linguistic, and ethical development and to help them flourish as productive and contributing members of a collective, democratic, and just society. As she puts it, she aims to help children:

[To] develop their social and emotional skills. To help them realize that they're problem-solvers at this age. To help them see the importance of working with a partner, working in a small group, the collaboration, I would say...Being able to try things when you're upset...

Acquiring those techniques, those strategies when you come across a problem. I think these are skills that you won't master in kindergarten, but you will need throughout your life...And I would say it's so important for me as a teacher in this classroom to work on that.

Study Goals, Design, and Methods

This study aims to illuminate the kind of preparation that allows teachers like Liliana to practice in the deliberate, developmentally-conscious manner illustrated above. The major goals of the study are to:

1. explore the *professional trajectories* of graduates of Bank Street College teacher certification programs, including job placement and retention;
2. investigate the *preparedness* of graduates of Bank Street College teacher certification programs, including their perceptions of the quality of preparation for various aspects of teaching, their satisfaction with their preparation, and their sense of efficacy in comparison to other teachers in New York State;
3. examine the *effectiveness* of classroom teachers prepared at Bank Street College and working in New York City public schools, as measured by pupil learning gains and by principals' assessments of their competence;
4. document and describe in vivid detail the *classroom practices* of Bank Street College graduates, accounting for the relationship among context, practice, and student opportunities for learning at a set of select schools with a significant Bank Street presence.

To examine the quality of preparatory experiences at Bank Street, the teaching practices of Bank Street graduates, and the influences they have on their students' learning, we employed a multimethods research design that included extensive surveys of graduates, comparison teachers, and employers; analyses of large-scale administrative data; classroom and school observations; and numerous interviews. In addition, several classroom and school level case studies describe the classroom practices of Bank Street graduates and seek to evaluate the cumulative effects of school-wide practices in settings likely to be supportive of the Bank Street approach. (See Appendix A: Research Methodology, Design, and School Sites for details.)

Teacher Surveys

To examine the professional trajectories and preparedness of graduates of Bank Street College teacher certification programs, we administered surveys to two sets of respondents in the spring of 2013.

Teaching Program Survey. We administered this survey to all Bank Street teacher certification program graduates from 2000 through 2012. We designed the survey to evaluate the various features of respondents' teacher preparation program, how well prepared they felt to effectively enact a number of teaching activities, and how much opportunity they had to learn about specific English language arts and mathematics teaching topics and instructional strategies during their teacher preparation program. We used a mixed-mode approach for administering the survey, utilizing both online and paper surveys. Ultimately, 1,384 (53.0%) of the 2,756 teaching program graduates with valid e-mail or postal addresses responded to the survey.

Comparison Teacher Survey. We designed this survey to parallel the Teaching Program Survey, so that comparisons could be made between Bank Street graduates and other teachers in the state of New York. The sample for the Comparison Teacher Survey contained 1,000 classroom teachers in kindergarten through eighth grade who were randomly selected from the New York State United Teachers' membership database and whose email addresses were confirmed to be valid. In addition to online and paper surveys, we also used phone surveys for this sample, and 407 (40.7%) teachers in the comparison set responded to the survey.

Measuring Teacher Effectiveness

We used two data sources to examine the effectiveness of Bank Street teacher certification program graduates.

The Employer Survey asked administrators at schools where Bank Street College graduates were currently or likely to be employed to evaluate the preparedness and effectiveness of Bank Street graduates. These questions were slightly modified versions of the questions included in the Teaching Program Survey and the Comparison Teacher Survey that asked the teachers how well they thought their teacher preparation program prepared them to do the same set of activities. The sample for this survey included principals in 389 schools in 29 states who employed or were likely to employ Bank Street teaching program graduates. We used online and paper surveys, and 209 (53.7%) responded.

We obtained and analyzed a **large-scale teacher–student linked administrative data set from the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE)** to determine whether effects of Bank Street–prepared teachers on student achievement could be discerned. See Analysis of Pupil Learning Games (page 38) and Appendix A for an extended description of the administrative data provided by NYC DOE and the

value-added models used for data analysis, as well as a discussion of the limitations of using these models to examine the effectiveness of Bank Street College graduates as well as other teachers and teaching programs.

Case Studies

To document and describe in vivid detail the classroom practices of Bank Street graduates, we employed a set of classroom and school-level case studies. The purpose of the case studies is to share vivid descriptions of Bank Street graduates in their classrooms and, to the degree possible, consider the influences of those practices on students' opportunities for learning. The case study component of this larger evaluation project seeks to answer the question: What does the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach look like in practice?



In examining this question, we were guided by two intersecting ideas. First, we recognized that we would see many variations on the Bank Street approach, as practice will always be shaped and influenced by the particulars of the local context and conditions. Second, we were interested in versions of the Bank Street approach that occurred in schools where there was an established “footprint” of Bank Street’s presence. To this end, we examined schools with close ties and connections to Bank Street, presuming that such schools would provide the best context within which Bank Street graduates would be afforded the opportunity to engage in practices resonant with their preparation.

The schools selected to participate in our study were:

- Midtown West School, a New York City public school;
- Brooklyn New School, a New York City public school; and
- Community Roots Charter School, a Brooklyn public charter school.

See Appendix A for additional details on the study design, methods, and case study school sites.

About Bank Street College of Education

Our work is based on the faith that human beings can improve the society they have created.

—Lucy Sprague Mitchell, Bank Street College of Education Founder

History of Bank Street College of Education

Originally known as the Bureau of Educational Experiments, Bank Street College of Education was founded in 1916 by educator Lucy Sprague Mitchell, who had served as the first dean of women at the University of California at Berkeley. Influenced by revolutionary educator John Dewey, Mitchell and her colleagues concluded that constructing a new kind of educational system was essential to building a better, more rational, and more humane world. As part of the progressive movement at the beginning of the 20th century, she saw in the Bureau an opportunity to provide the cornerstone of a more democratic and just society through the education of young people. Established initially as a research organization, the Bureau later functioned as a non-degree program for individuals interested in learning about children's development through child study and actual teaching. The Bureau set out to study children—to find out what kind of environment is best suited to their learning and growth, to create that environment, and to train adults to maintain it. Teachers, psychologists, and researchers collaboratively examined how children grow and develop. By documenting these processes, they sought to better understand what types of environments and educational practices best fostered the growth and development of children (Grinberg, 2005).

The Bureau continued working primarily in research, clinical studies, and children's literature until 1930, when it moved to 69 Bank Street in Greenwich Village. In part, the move supported efforts to set up the Cooperative School for Student Teachers, a joint venture with eight experimental schools to develop a teacher education program to produce teachers dedicated to stimulating the development of the whole child.

The transition to Bank Street occurred in 1931 as a result of a series of meetings between Mitchell and leaders of a network of progressive private schools who approached Mitchell with the idea of creating a cooperative teacher preparation program (Ginsberg, 2005). The impetus for this proposal emerged because,

according to leaders of progressive private schools in Manhattan at the time, such as Walden School, City and Country School, and Ethical Culture School, “Normal schools and universities did a poor job preparing teachers” (p. 13). These progressive school leaders believed that teachers graduating from traditional programs had been acculturated to an idea of teaching that emphasized narrow methods and prescriptive practice and that teachers were not open to approaches anchored in child development, social justice, and the social context of children and schooling. Mitchell was enthusiastic about the teacher preparation project and the first cohort began in 1931–32.

Mitchell’s mission was to develop a program that prepared teachers to undertake teaching as an endeavor fusing the systematic methods of a scientist with the creative open-mindedness of an artist. In 1931 she articulated the overarching principles guiding the new school in an article written in the journal *Progressive Education*:

Our aim is to turn out teachers whose attitude toward their work and toward life is scientific. To us, this means an attitude of eager, alert observation; a constant questioning of old procedure in the light of new observations; a use of the world, as well as of books, as source material; an experimental open-mindedness, and an effort to keep as reliable records as the situation permits, in order to base the future upon accurate knowledge of what has been done...If we can produce teachers with an experimental, critical, and ardent approach to their work, we are ready to leave the future of education to them. (Mitchell, 1931, p. 251)

Mitchell’s original vision of teaching still guides and animates the Bank Street approach to the preparation of teachers. In a 2007 concept paper on the progressive ideals of teacher preparation, longtime Bank Street faculty member Nancy Nager and Edna Shapiro contend that the approach developed by Mitchell and her colleagues remains central to the work of Bank Street: “The breadth of Mitchell’s synthesis, her capacity to inspire others with her vision, and the heuristic framework she helped shape may be at least partly responsible for the remarkable durability of key ideas” (p. 8).

The success of Mitchell’s teacher preparation program resulted, in 1950, with the Cooperative School for Teachers being certified by the Board of Regents of New York State to confer a master of science degree. To reflect this change, the Bureau was renamed the Bank Street College of Education. Since then, the Bank Street Graduate School of Education has offered teaching credential and master’s degree programs in a range of areas and specializations (Grinberg, 2005).

In the second half of the twentieth century, Bank Street continued to fulfill what Nager and Shapiro (2007) characterize as the progressive ethos of Mitchell’s work: “an effort to effect societal change toward greater equity and democratic participation” (p. 6). They list the following among its many accomplishments:

- Bank Street was one of the first institutions of higher education to work in active partnership with the public schools of New York City.
- Bank Street worked collaboratively with the federal government to support the design of the national Head Start program.
- Bank Street published the first multiracial, urban-oriented readers for young children—the *Bank Street Readers*, and more recently developed the *Bank Street Ready-to-Read* series.
- Bank Street served as a prime sponsor and designer of Project Follow Through (1968–1981), a federal program providing educational support services for kindergarten and early elementary school children and their families in economically disadvantaged areas.

There have been many more accomplishments to add to this list since that time, including:

- Bank Street developed Liberty LEADS, a program that supports underserved youth in grades 5–12 to prepare for and succeed in high school and college. Bank Street’s Family Center and Head Start Center provide direct services to pre-K children and families.
- Bank Street was selected as one of 11 institutions to participate in the landmark Teachers for a New Era (TNE) initiative. Funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Annenberg Foundation, and the Ford Foundation, TNE was designed to strengthen K–12 teaching by developing and strengthening excellent teacher education programs.
- In collaboration with Newark Public Schools in New Jersey, Bank Street developed Project New Beginnings to help restructure and reform early childhood education in the city’s public schools.
- Bank Street has also collaborated on multiple projects with high-needs public schools. Both the Partnership for Quality, a collaboration between Bank Street and New York City’s Region 9 public schools, and Bank Street’s Adelaide Weismann Center for Innovative Leadership in Education have worked toward the improvement of high-needs public schools in the region.
- Bank Street Head Start offers children and their families a comprehensive, developmentally meaningful educational program focused

on children's cognitive, social, emotional, health, nutritional, and psychological needs.

- In 2014, Bank Street partnered with the New York City Department of Education to launch Getting Ready for Pre-K: An Institute for Educators, a professional development initiative designed to advance best practices in pre-kindergarten teaching and learning.

Program Summary of Bank Street College

Bank Street College has three major divisions: Children's Programs; Innovation, Policy, and Research; and the Graduate School of Education.

Children's programs

Bank Street has a long, continuous history of offering direct programs for children. Current programs include the Bank Street School for Children, an independent school serving children ages 3–14; the Family Center, an on-site child care center serving infants, toddlers, and preschoolers from 6 months to 4 years old, including programs for children with special needs; as well as after-school and summer programs.



Innovation, policy, and research

Established in 2009, the Division of Innovation, Policy and Research (IPR) is focused on the development of new programs and exploring new directions and possibilities for Bank Street.

Graduate School of Education

The Bank Street College Graduate School of Education provides master's degree and certification programs across a broad array of areas and specializations. Enrollment across all programs is approximately 650–700 students annually. The Graduate School offers numerous degree or certification programs, summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Bank Street College Graduate School of Education degree and certification programs

General teacher education	Special education	Bilingual education	Child life and infancy	Educational leadership
General education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood • Childhood • Dual: early childhood and childhood 	Single certification special education degree <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood • Childhood • Infant & family development and early intervention/early childhood special education 	Dual language/ bilingual master of science in education, dual certification special and general education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood • Childhood 	Child life master's degree	Principals Institute
Curriculum and instruction			Infant & family development and early intervention master's degree	Future School Leaders Academy
Museum education: childhood certification	Dual certification special and general education degree <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood • Childhood • Infant & family development and early intervention/early childhood 	Dual language/ bilingual master of science in education, certification general education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood • Childhood 		Early childhood leadership
Reading & literacy programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching literacy & childhood general education • Teaching literacy: classroom • Teaching literacy: clinical • Advanced literacy specialization 		Dual language/ bilingual master of science in education, certification special education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood • Childhood 		Leadership in mathematics education
Studies in education		Bilingual extension: certification in education		Leadership in community-based learning
Teacher leader in mathematics				Leadership in museum education
				Leadership for educational change (can focus on the arts or special education)

Note. Bank Street College of Education, 2014d.

Teacher Preparation at Bank Street College

This evaluation report focuses on graduates of teaching certification programs in the Bank Street College of Education Graduate School. While these programs vary in content and emphasis, several key components lie at the core of the teacher preparation experience at Bank Street. Broadly, the teacher preparation program course curricula encompass five key areas:

1. **Child development.** Extensive study of child development, developmental variations, language acquisition, and the observation and recording of children all support a strong developmental orientation to teaching and learning in diverse and inclusive education settings. Additionally, the study of children is nested in the study of family, child, and teacher interactions, connecting the work of schooling with families and communities. Specialized courses in block building, dramatic play, and storytelling connect a developmental orientation to teaching with opportunities for engaging and supporting learning through play.
2. **Language and literacy.** Multiple courses help prepare teachers to effectively instruct their students in reading, writing, language arts, and literature, as well as to support the range of language learners with developing English language skills in diverse classroom settings.
3. **Curriculum Development.** Through Social Studies: Expressing the heart of the Bank Street approach, this course explores “content, structure, and methods of responsive social studies curricula” with attention paid to “such topics as mapping, trips, and the use of artifacts; the infusion of technology and the arts; authentic assessment; the role of state standards; and curriculum integration” (Bank Street College of Education 2014b).
4. **Subject-matter curriculum and instruction.** Additional cross-discipline courses offer a constructivist orientation to the teaching of science, math, and the creative arts.
5. **Foundations of Modern Education.** This course explores “the historical, philosophical, and cultural roots of contemporary education, including Bank Street’s history and philosophy.... to help [them] to expand and deepen their understanding of the social, political, and economic forces that influence the work of educators and children and their families” (Bank Street College of Education, 2014b).

Three other pillars of the teacher preparation experience at Bank Street complement program coursework:

Supervised Fieldwork and Advisement

While there is significant variation in the type, duration, and intensity of field experiences among programs and pathways, Bank Street teacher preparation programs all rely on the integration of coursework and clinical experiences in schools. Prospective teachers work in classrooms for extended periods of time as student teachers, teaching assistants, or teachers of record, depending on their program. Most prospective teachers spend a year or more in the classroom as part of their program.

All prospective teachers also engage in Bank Street's intensive advisement experience. Advisement entails regular classroom observations and individual meetings with a faculty advisor to support professional learning and growth, as well as a weekly collaborative conference group with a faculty advisor and small group of graduate student peers.

Integrative Master's Project

All of Bank Street's teacher preparation programs culminate with a capstone integrative master's project, an opportunity for graduate students to synthesize academic and practical work in the domain of the teaching profession through a range of projects, such as a professional portfolio, an action-research project, independent study, or a mentored directed essay. Candidates have the opportunity to follow their curiosity, passion, and interests in selecting the form of their integrative master's project.

Bank Street Faculty

The Bank Street model of teacher preparation relies heavily on a cadre of faculty members with a depth of experience and expertise as practitioners in schools and classrooms. Further, many faculty take on roles across the program—serving as course instructors, supervised fieldwork advisors, and integrative master's project advisors. The involvement of core faculty across key roles and functions provides a level of coherence and coordination within Bank Street's teacher preparation programs.

The Bank Street Developmental-Interaction Approach

Our lens in shaping our work for this project has been the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach, an approach to teaching, learning, and teacher development that can trace its roots to a Progressive Era movement that began in the early 20th century. The Bank Street approach was conceived, in large part, in the work of progressive educator and Bank Street founder, Lucy Sprague Mitchell. Her vision was that the school would be a laboratory that would be staffed by teachers, psychologists, and researchers whose collaborative work would create and study environments in which children grew and learned to their full potential, and to educate teachers and others about how to create these environments.

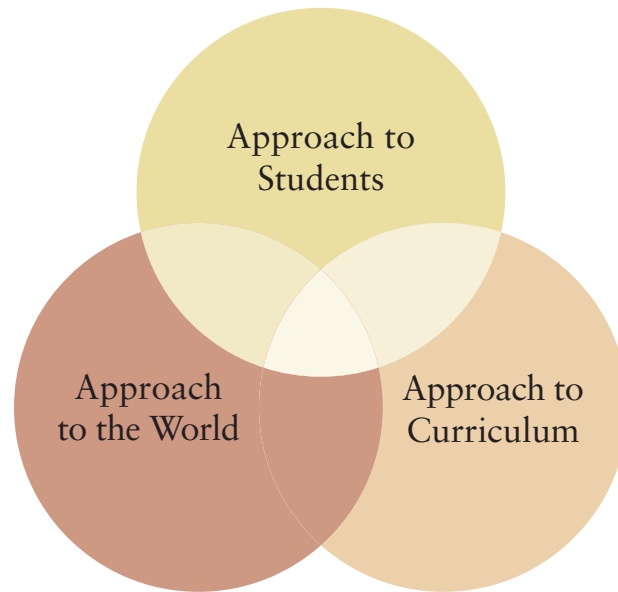
Mitchell's original vision of teaching still guides and animates the Bank Street approach to the preparation of teachers. In a 2007 concept paper on the progressive ideals of teacher preparation, Nager and Shapiro contend that the approach developed by Mitchell and her colleagues remains central to the work of Bank Street. They identify five key principles that continue to guide Bank Street's approach to the "teaching of teachers":

1. Education is a vehicle for creating and promoting social justice and encouraging participation in democratic processes.
2. The teacher has a deep knowledge of subject matter areas and is actively engaged in learning through formal study, direct observation, and participation.
3. Understanding children's learning and development in the context of family, community, and culture is needed for teaching.
4. The teacher continues to grow as a person and as a professional.
5. Teaching requires a philosophy of education—a view of learning and the learner, knowledge and knowing—which informs all elements of teaching (Nager & Shapiro, 2007, p. 9).

This conception of teaching and learning instantiated and fostered at Bank Street has come to be known as the "developmental-interaction approach," or more popularly, as "the Bank Street approach." Educators who embrace the developmental-interaction approach to teaching recognize that students' development unfolds at varying paces and through interaction with the world. The classroom is regarded as a space that would "strengthen the child's competence to deal effectively with the environment; encourage the development of autonomy and the construction of a sense of self; promote the integration of functions—that is, thought and feeling, feeling and action—and stimulate individuality and vigorous, creative response" (Shapiro & Nager, 2000, p. 22).

For the purpose of this evaluation study, we reviewed a wide range of materials and interviewed a number of experienced Bank Street faculty and graduates in an effort to distill the Bank Street approach into a framework or lens that would help to guide data collection, analysis, and writing, while grounding our understanding of the Bank Street approach within classroom practice. We describe our findings here, recognizing that a vision originally articulated nearly a century ago would be shaped and reshaped by the diverse array of individuals who engage with it. There is no one perfect way to describe or instantiate an approach held, shared, and exemplified by a diverse array of individuals over a long period of history.

Accordingly, the lens we used in conducting these cases studies was “the Bank Street approach,” distilled here as an interrelated and integrated approach to students, approach to curriculum, and approach to the world:



Approach to Students

We defined the “Bank Street approach to students” as one that is:

- Founded first and foremost on knowing individual student’s strengths, interest, and needs;
- Developmentally oriented and grounded;
- Committed to the notion that student growth is fostered by interaction with materials and the world around them;
- Based on building strong connections and relationships with individual students;
- Founded on a broad level of and orientation to inclusivity;
- Intent on taking students seriously, seeing students as active learners, makers of meaning, and researchers of their worlds; and
- Aware of the social, cultural, and individual nature of development.

Approach to Curriculum

We defined the “Bank Street approach to curriculum” as one that is:

- Broad-based, but with special and particular attention and depth in the social studies;
- Encouraging of long-term, student-centered projects and other extended explorations of topics and subjects;
- Interdisciplinary, with emphasis on engagement with and integration of the arts;
- “Constructivist” in its orientation, providing students opportunities to help shape and drive curricular and instructional choices;
- Centered around both the learner and learning; and
- Focused on the learning process to arrive at desired outcomes.

Approach to the World

We defined the “Bank Street approach to the world” as one that is:

- Founded firmly within the tradition of progressive education, governance, and social values;
- Oriented toward meaningful connections to the family, community, and larger world;
- Encouraging of children and teachers to take up questions and issues of justice and equity in their work;
- Committed to the notion that schools should be in service of a more equitable and just society; and
- Supportive of teachers as collaborative professionals, robust decision-makers, lifelong learners, and politically engaged and oriented.

Summary

In sum, this evaluation project examines the quality of preparation of Bank Street graduates, their teaching practices upon graduation, the influence they have on their students' learning, and the cumulative effects of school-wide practices at schools supportive of the Bank Street approach by triangulating analyses of surveys, large-scale administrative data, classroom and school observations, and interview data.

The larger study, *Teaching for a Changing World: The Graduates of Bank Street College of Education*, has five publications, including this study:

- *The Threads They Follow: Bank Street Teachers in a Changing World*
- *The Preparation, Professional Pathways, and Effectiveness of Bank Street Graduates*
- *Learning to Play, Playing to Learn: The Bank Street Developmental-Interaction Approach in Liliana's Kindergarten Classroom*
- *Artful Teaching and Learning: The Bank Street Developmental-Interaction Approach at Midtown West School*
- *A School Growing Roots: The Bank Street Developmental-Interaction Approach at Community Roots Charter School*



Professional Pathways, Perceptions of Preparation, and Analysis of Effectiveness

Bank Street College of Education was by far the best thing I ever did for myself as both a learner and a teacher. It made me the teacher I am today. The courses and instructors were unparalleled in their knowledge and understanding of child development and curriculum development.

—Bank Street graduate

Overall, I have found Bank Street students to be extremely insightful and reflective. They are open to and actively engage in continued learning. They are dedicated professionals who take their commitment to education and young children seriously.

—Employer

This section of the report documents the quality and impact of Bank Street College of Education teacher preparation programs based upon surveys of graduates, surveys of comparison teachers, surveys of employers, and an analysis of pupil achievement gains. Specifically, this section of the report addresses the following research questions:

- **Where are Bank Street graduates now?** We analyzed alumni surveys to identify employment and retention patterns.
- **How do Bank Street graduates evaluate the quality of their preparation?** We gauged Bank Street graduates' satisfaction with their preparation and sense of readiness for the challenges of the teaching profession in comparison to other teachers.
- **Do Bank Street graduates demonstrate qualities of effective teachers?** We surveyed employers about their satisfaction with the skills and qualities of Bank Street–prepared teachers and measured pupil learning gains.

Where are Bank Street Graduates Now?

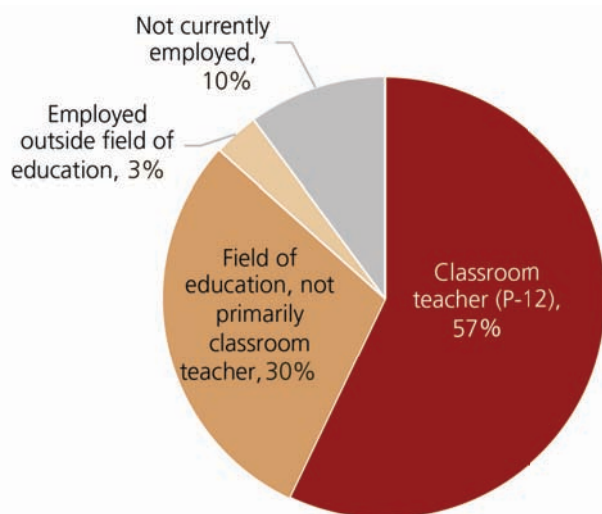
Employment and Retention Patterns

Retention rates among teachers are an important and closely scrutinized outcome within the profession. Research indicates that more effective teachers are more likely to stay in the profession and that teachers gain in effectiveness with experience (Boyd et al., 2010; Kraft & Papay, 2014; Nye et al, 2004; Rockoff, 2004). **Bank Street graduates enter and remain in the field of education at high rates:** 87% of respondents to the Teaching Program Survey indicate that their primary position is in the field of education, with 57% working as P–12 classroom teachers. Among the five most recent cohorts surveyed, 68% of graduates report positions as classroom teachers, rates that surpass national and local averages for teachers in urban communities. Many graduates from older cohorts have moved from classroom teaching to other school positions, such as administration or support personnel, but have remained in the field of education. (See Figure 1 and Figure 2.)

Additionally, Bank Street graduates are professionally active. Compared to a random sample of New York State teachers (kindergarten through grade 8), Bank Street graduates are more likely to have attended a professional conference, planned or conducted professional development, participated in a school reform or improvement committee, and participated in starting or leading a new school or program.

Bank Street graduates are most commonly employed in public and private schools in New York City and tend to teach preschool and early elementary school grades.

Figure 1. Bank Street Teaching Program Graduates: Primary Employment



Of the Bank Street graduates who were currently teaching when they took the survey, 66% report teaching in New York City—54% of whom were at private schools in the city (including a large number in private preschools, which was the largest early childhood sector at the time of the survey), 33% at NYC DOE public non-charter schools, and 11% at public charter schools. At least 40% of graduates have taught for at least some period of their career in New York City public schools. Just over half report currently teaching at a private school, while 11% report working in a charter school. (See Figure 3 and Figure 4, pp. 24–25.)

Figure 2. Bank Street Teaching Program Graduates: Primary Employment by Cohort

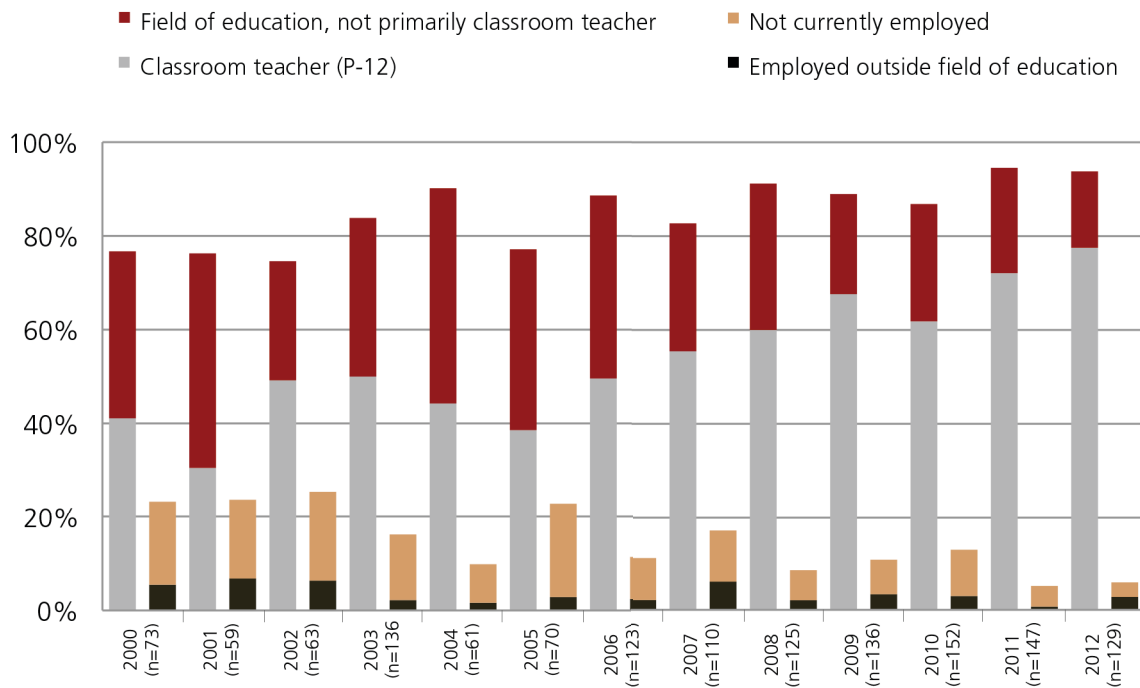


Figure 3. Bank Street Teaching Program Graduates: Current School Location and Type

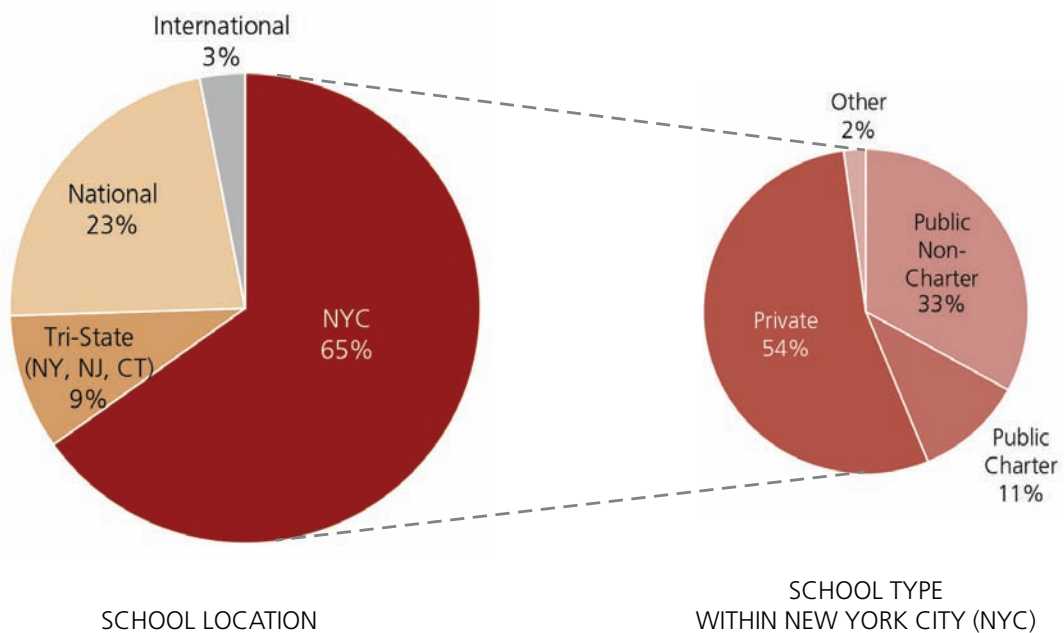
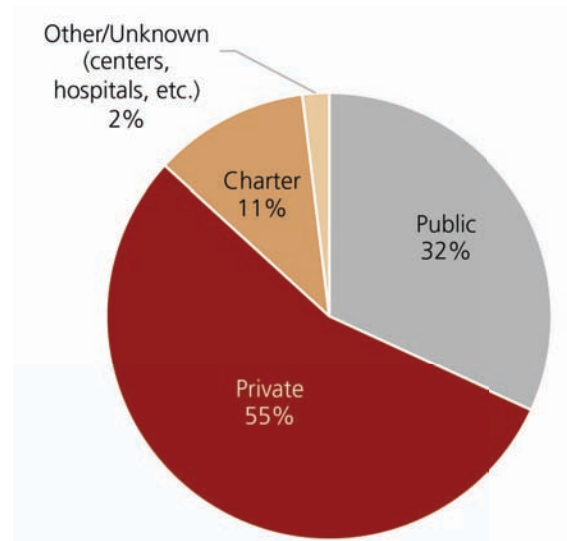


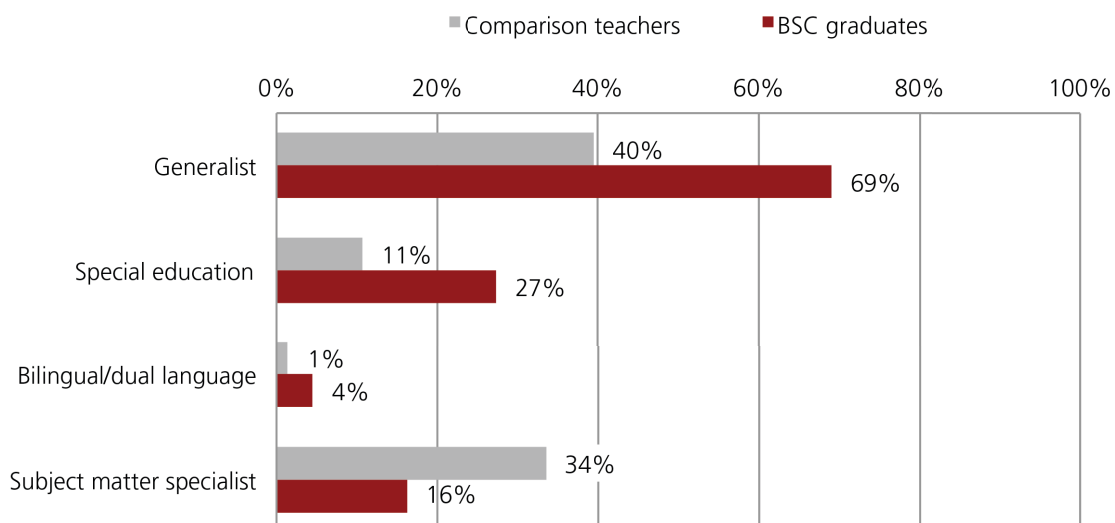
Figure 4. Bank Street Teaching Program Graduates: Current School Type



Bank Street teaching program graduates are highly concentrated in preschool positions (22%) and early elementary school grade settings (50% in grades K–2).

Additionally, 69% report that they are generalists, 16% report that they are subject matter specialists, 27% report that they work in special education, and 4% report that a bilingual/dual-language specialization applies to their position. By comparison, graduates of other programs report that they are subject matter at higher rates and respond at significantly lower rates in the other categories. (See Figure 5.)

Figure 5. Responses of Bank Street Graduates and Comparison Teachers to Survey Question: *What subjects or other specializations apply to your current position?*



How Do Bank Street Graduates Evaluate the Quality of Their Preparation?

Program Satisfaction and Sense of Preparation

My experiences at Bank Street as a student...have prepared me well in my roles as a nursery school teacher and assistant director. I learned how to think about children's and adults' development, curriculum planning, collaborating with a group of adults, and how to be a reflective practitioner. I am able to create meaningful experiences for the children through which they can construct their own knowledge. I feel like Bank Street is an incredible institution, which I highly recommend to others.

—Bank Street graduate

My learning experience at Bank Street was tremendous....I find that the information I gained from Bank Street colors my work with children, daily.

—Bank Street graduate

Overall, Bank Street graduates rate their preparation very highly. As demonstrated in Figure 6 (next page), 87% of the Bank Street graduates responded that their teacher preparation program was “effective” or “very effective,” as compared to 66% of the comparison teachers. Open-ended comments often emphasize the strengths of their Bank Street preparation in incorporating knowledge of learning and development into curriculum planning and instruction and the creation of developmentally meaningful environments and learning opportunities for children.

When asked about the utility of specific aspects of their preparation program in preparing them as a teacher, **Bank Street graduates are significantly more likely than comparison teachers to report that program coursework, advisement/supervisory support, and the caliber of the instructors of their classes were “helpful” or “very helpful” in preparing them as teachers.** In each case, more than 80% of Bank Street graduates rate these program features as “helpful” or “very helpful.” Both Bank Street graduates and comparison teachers rate the importance of their field experiences highly. (See Figure 7, next page.)

Figure 6. Responses of Bank Street Graduates and Comparison Teachers to Survey Question: *How effective was your teacher preparation program at developing the skills or tools you needed to become a teacher?*

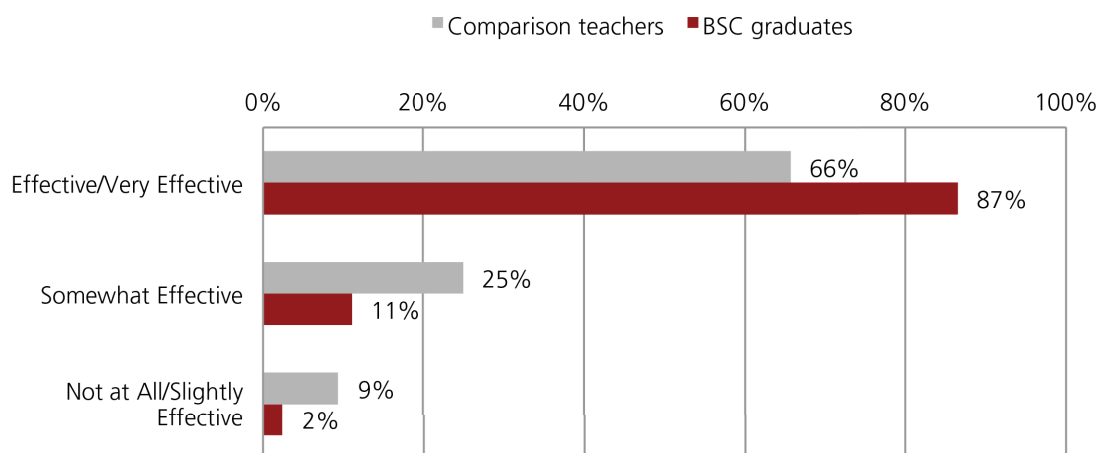
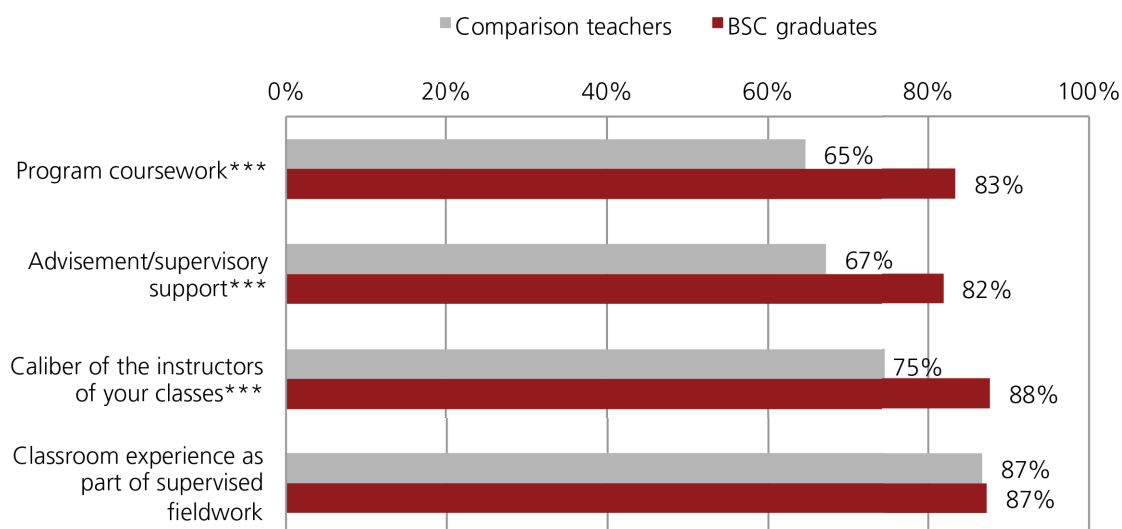


Figure 7. Percentage of Bank Street Graduates and Comparison Teachers Who Responded “Helpful” or “Very Helpful” to Survey Question: *How helpful were the following aspects of your teacher preparation program in preparing you as a teacher?*



Note. Significance of comparison of item means of Bank Street College graduates versus comparison teachers indicated next to item: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Mission Connection

Bank Street Graduate School is an exceptional graduate training program that has provided me with the tools and experience that [are] essential to the work that I do today.

—Bank Street graduate

I valued the child-centered and progressive approach Bank Street offered. My student teaching experiences were extremely helpful and provided excellent learning experiences that I took with me into my first year teaching.

—Bank Street graduate

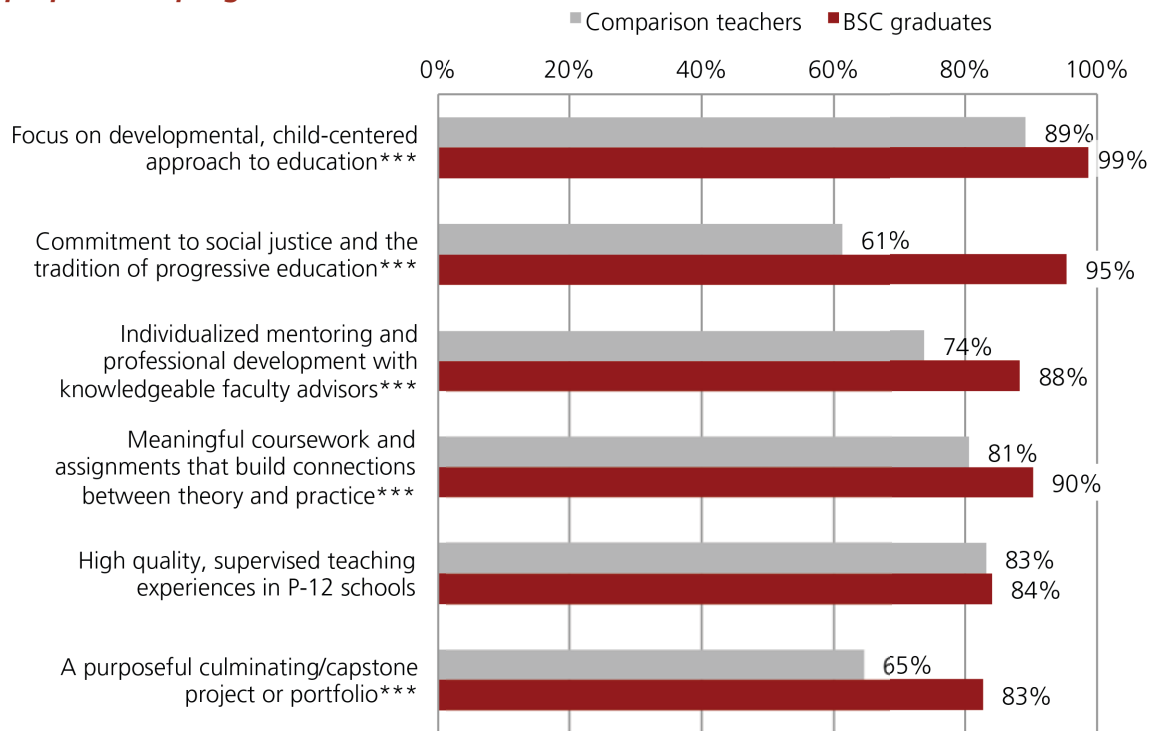
Every working day of my life I am grateful for the progressive model taught at Bank Street. As an early interventionist, my education has been particularly useful as I engage with very young children and their parents—always remembering to address “the whole child” and working from a framework of the child’s/family’s strengths.

—Bank Street graduate

In a range of professional publications and through its public and online presence, Bank Street makes a number of claims about its aims and approach to the preparation of educators and the teaching and learning of children. To assess the resonance of those aims with the experiences of graduates of Bank Street teacher preparation programs, our surveys asked graduates to rate the extent to which they agreed that specific features characterized their teacher preparation program. **These results suggest that to a significant degree, graduates found that their educational experiences at the college successfully aligned with Bank Street’s stated mission.**

In comparison to other teacher preparation programs, Bank Street is significantly more likely to be characterized by graduates as having a focus on a developmental, child-centered approach to education (99% vs. 89% of other program graduates); a commitment to social justice and the tradition of progressive education (95% vs. 61%); individualized mentoring and professional development with knowledgeable faculty advisors (88% vs. 74%); meaningful coursework and assignments that build connections between theory and practice (90% vs. 81%); and a purposeful culminating/capstone project or portfolio (83% vs. 65%). Bank Street graduates strongly agreed, as did the comparison teachers, that they received high-quality, supervised teaching experiences (84% and 83% respectively). (See Figure 8, next page.)

Figure 8. Percentages of Bank Street Graduates and Comparison Teachers Who Responded “Somewhat Agree” or “Strongly Agree” to Survey Question: *To what extent do you agree that the following features characterized your teacher preparation program?*



Note. Significance of comparison of item means of Bank Street College graduates versus comparison teachers indicated next to item: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Quality of Coursework and Instruction

Bank Street graduates are significantly more likely than the comparison teachers to report that the caliber of their course instructors was “helpful” or “very helpful” in preparing them to teach (88% vs. 75%, respectively). Open-ended comments on the surveys underscore the Bank Street graduates’ appreciation for the quality of the Bank Street teaching faculty and their coursework:

- I loved my Bank Street coursework and continue to draw on it, 16 years into my teaching career.
- The care and thoughtful work of the faculty is not only memorable but integral to the development of my professional work. The faculty serve as wonderful models for the content which they teach. I am so fortunate and thankful to have received a graduate education from the Bank Street Graduate School.

- I feel very lucky to have had the professors I did. The caliber of instruction they provided and the tone of respect for children they established in their courses was invaluable.
- I found that my coursework and professors at Bank Street prepared me very well for my current position, teaching preschool at an independent school. I frequently go back to my course materials for curriculum inspiration as well as resources for parents and colleagues.
- Bank Street was a formative experience for me because of the incredible teachers I was exposed to. The vast majority were inspiring, engaging, and intellectually stimulating. I looked forward to going to almost every class. The teachers are really what make Bank Street the institution it is.

Among the Bank Street graduates who are currently teaching, 90% state that Bank Street delivers meaningful coursework and requires assignments that build connections between theory and practice; this compares to 80% of the comparison teachers who felt the same way about their own teacher preparation program. Additionally, **Bank Street graduates are significantly more likely than the comparison teachers to report that their program coursework was “helpful” or “very helpful” in preparing them as teachers, 83% versus 65%, respectively.**

Quality of Field Experiences and Advisement

Bank Street programs offer variable, yet clinically rich experiences as part of supervised fieldwork. Bank Street offers a wide range of programs and pathways, and this variation is reflected in the clinical experiences of its teacher candidates. When asked to describe the nature of their supervised fieldwork when they attended Bank Street, 47% of the Bank Street graduates described themselves as student teachers, in contrast to 87% of the comparison teachers. Another 22% of the Bank Street graduates described themselves as paid assistant teachers, compared to 2% of the comparison teachers. (This role is most common in early childhood education settings, and Bank Street graduates work in that field at a high rate, as noted above.) Of the Bank Street graduates who were serving as teacher of record during their supervised fieldwork, a disproportionate number were part of Teach for America (8.9%); another 8.3% were paid head teachers at independent schools, and 5.2% served as interns who received a stipend.

A key feature of Bank Street programs is the extended fieldwork experience, supported by an intensive small group advisory. Perhaps, then, it is unsurprising to learn that **Bank Street graduates were much more likely to have spent an extensive amount of time in supervised fieldwork** compared to the teachers in our comparison sample. More than half of the Bank Street graduates report spending over 720 hours

(approximately equivalent to 120 six-hour days or 24 weeks) in a classroom placement; in contrast, only 13% of the comparison teachers said the same. Conversely, almost 70% of the comparison teachers spent fewer than 480 hours (approximately equivalent to 80 days or 16 weeks) in supervised fieldwork, whereas less than a third of the Bank Street graduates reported the same. (We find that when we limit the samples to only those describing themselves as “student teachers,” the trend that we observed among the full sample holds.)

In addition to the extensive nature of their clinical experience, Bank Street graduates generally report favorably about the quality of those experiences. Bank Street graduates are significantly more likely than the comparison teachers to agree that their supervisor(s) regularly observed their teaching, met with them, and offered constructive feedback about their teaching. They were also more likely to agree that their program had a sequence of courses and school experiences that addressed the complexities of teaching gradually over time. At the same time, the variability in clinical experiences for Bank Street students was evidenced in the fact that the duration, classroom support, and quality of clinical experiences appear to be stronger for Bank Street teacher candidates who completed traditional student teaching placements or served as assistant teachers or interns, than for those who served as teachers of record either in independent schools or through programs like Teach for America. (See the report, *The Preparation, Professional Pathways, and Effectiveness of Bank Street Graduates*, for additional details on this topic.)

Bank Street graduates also report that they appreciate the individualized mentoring and professional development they received from knowledgeable faculty advisors. Among those who are currently teaching, 82% believe that the advisement and supervisory support they received at Bank Street was “helpful” or “very helpful” in preparing them to become teachers, which is significantly more than the 67% of the comparison teachers who believe the same about the advisement and supervision they received in their teacher preparation programs.

Bank Street graduates lauded the quality and impact of their supervised fieldwork and advisement experiences:

- The practical experience I gained from my fieldwork and the conversations we had as a conference group [was] something that I cherish and look back upon fondly.
- My student teaching experience through Bank Street was a great culmination of all of my learning and coursework. My cooperating teacher and supervisor were supportive and guided me through lessons and classroom management. My weekly conference groups were also an integral part of the supervised fieldwork experience because it further helped me reflect on my experiences within the classroom.

- It is a special community and one that I continue to rely on. Our conference group still meets with our advisor several times a year. We have carried our connection forward and still use each other to reflect on our own practices.
- By far the greatest highlight and what really made my Bank Street education so valuable and special was the supervision program. I was very fortunate to be placed in two excellent schools with two great teachers. However, what really made these placements so successful was the supervision program. My advisor was always supportive, able to help at any time and helped provide advice when necessary....his feedback was valuable and constructive and provided me with the ability to grow and learn as a teacher. Additionally, my advisor has a great sense of humor that managed to make even the worst days better.
- I received an amazing education at Bank Street. I had four wonderful student teaching placements in four very different schools. My placements were in different grades ranging from pre-K all the way through fifth grade. And my head teachers were all strong teachers who taught me more than I thought possible.

Do Bank Street Graduates Demonstrate Qualities of Effective Teachers?

Our study draws on multiple assessment tools to evaluate whether Bank Street graduates demonstrate the qualities of effective teachers, including surveys of graduates eliciting perception of preparation in key skills for effective instruction, evaluations of graduates by employers, and an analysis of pupil learning gains a subset of Bank Street graduates teaching in New York City schools, in tested grades (4–8) and subjects (English language arts and math).

As noted above, employers have a very favorable view of Bank Street graduates, and Bank Street teaching program graduates are very satisfied with the preparation they received at Bank Street College (see pp. 35–37).

Analysis of the Skills and Qualities of Bank Street–Prepared Teachers

In *Powerful Teacher Education: Lessons from Exemplary Programs*, Darling-Hammond (2006) identified 27 teaching activities that are important for teacher effectiveness and that characterize teachers who engage in skillful, learner-centered practice. The activities are divided into five broad categories:

1. Engaging and supporting students in learning,
2. Assessing student learning,
3. Planning instruction and designing learning experiences for students,
4. Creating and maintaining effective environments for student learning, and
5. Working as a professional educator.

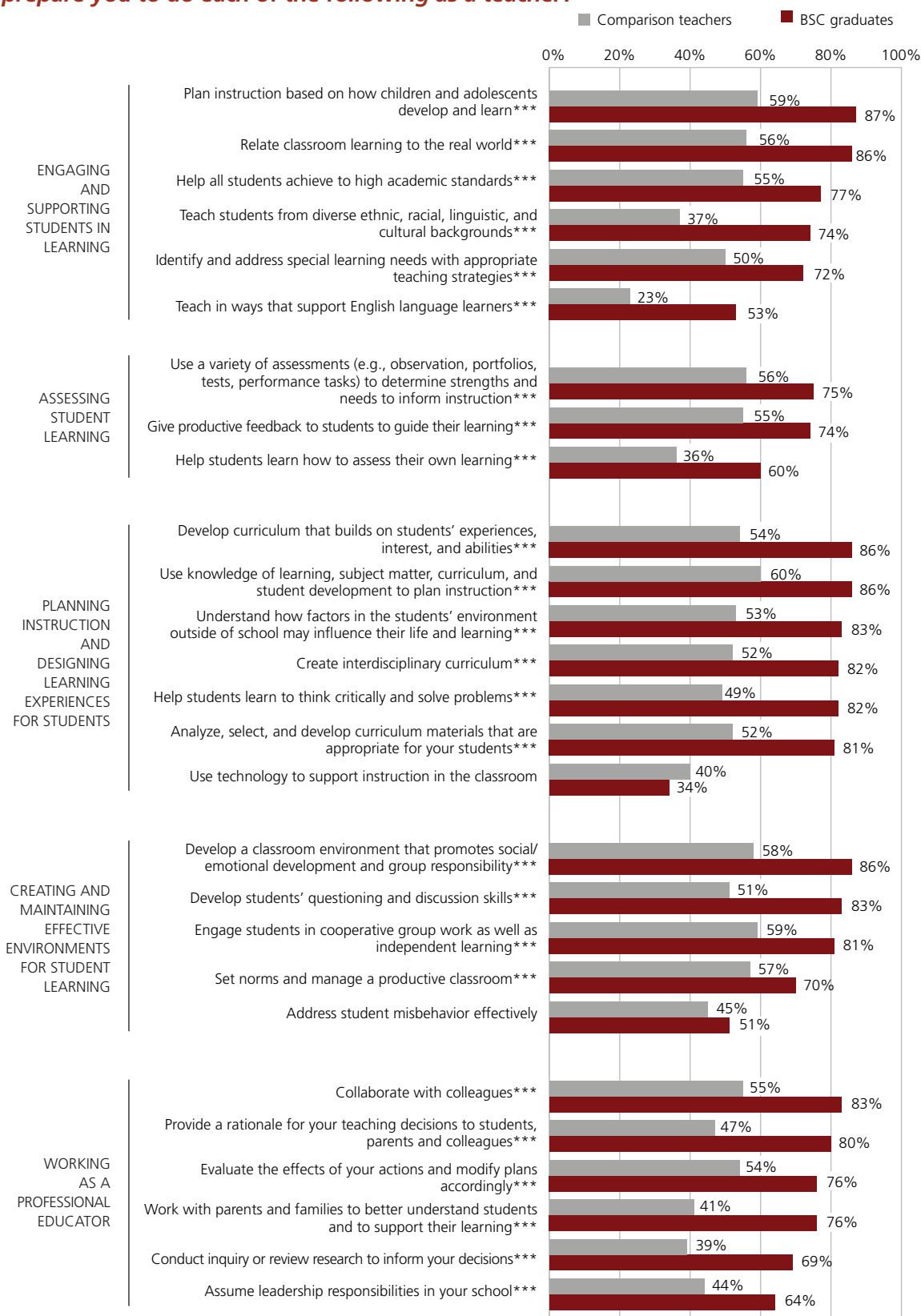
The Bank Street graduate and comparison teacher surveys asked respondents to rate how well their teacher preparation program prepared them to engage in each of these activities on a 5-point scale ranging from “not at all” to “very well.” **Almost across the board, Bank Street graduates rated their preparation to engage in these teaching activities significantly higher than the comparison teachers.** (See Figure 9, next page.)

Some dimensions stand out as particularly strong areas of preparation for the Bank Street graduates. For example, over 85% of the graduates report they were “well” or “very well” prepared to engage in each of the following as a teacher:

- Plan instruction based on how children and adolescents develop and learn;
- Relate classroom learning to the real world;
- Develop curriculum that builds on students’ experiences, interest, and abilities;
- Use knowledge of learning, subject matter, curriculum, and student development to plan instruction; and
- Develop a classroom environment that promotes social/emotional development and group responsibility.

In some areas the differences with comparison teachers were particularly stark. For example, 74% of Bank Street graduates indicate that they were “well” or “very well” prepared to teach students from diverse ethnic, racial, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds, as compared to only 37% of the comparison teachers. Similarly, 86% of Bank Street graduates indicate they were “well” or “very well” prepared to develop curriculum that builds on students’ experiences, interest, and abilities, as compared to only 54% of the comparison teachers. Finally, 80% of Bank Street graduates noted they were “well” or “very well” prepared to provide a rationale for their teaching decisions to students, parents, and colleagues, as compared to only 47% of comparison teachers.

Figure 9. Percentages of Bank Street Graduates and Comparison Teachers Who Responded “Well” or “Very Well” to Survey Question: *How well did your teacher preparation program prepare you to do each of the following as a teacher?*



Note. Significance of comparison of item means of Bank Street College graduates versus comparison teachers indicated next to item: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

As indicated by our survey respondents, Bank Street produces teachers who are well prepared for and engaged in skillful, learner-centered practice:

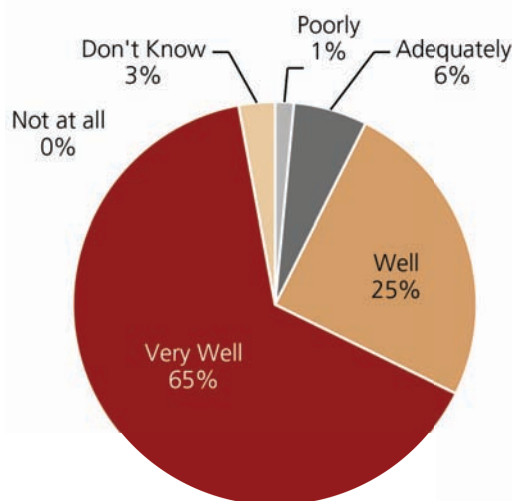
- Bank Street was a wonderful experience for me and I can't imagine having attended another graduate school program. The courses/fieldwork/advisors made me the teacher I am today, and I always strive to meet the standards of teaching I learned about there.
- My Bank Street experience has been a very valuable one. It has prepared me to handle the everyday activities and challenges that relate to teaching. Bank Street gave me the opportunity to understand how to appropriately work with children, parents, administration, and colleagues.
- My Bank Street experience was challenging, informative, and extremely beneficial to my career as a teacher. The first grad program I had attended focused primarily on philosophy, [whereas] Bank Street equipped me with the nuts and bolts of children's learning styles and how to best assess them. I appreciate the practical knowledge I gained.

Employer Satisfaction

We appraised the effectiveness of Bank Street graduates, in part, by asking employers (generally school principals) to evaluate the quality of their preparation.

Overwhelmingly, employers view Bank Street graduates very favorably, both overall and in specific aspects of teaching. As Figure 10 demonstrates, 90% of the respondents think that Bank Street graduates are “well” or “very well” prepared as teachers.

Figure 10. Responses of Employers to Survey Question: Overall, how well prepared do you think Bank Street College graduates are as teachers?



The Employer Survey also asked respondents to compare Bank Street graduates to other teachers with whom they have worked on a set of teaching activities. This list of activities is identical to the list used on the Bank Street Teaching Program Survey and the Comparison Teacher Survey. In those surveys, the teachers were asked how well their teacher preparation program prepared them to engage in each of these activities. As previously noted, these teaching activities have been shown to be the practices of effective teachers who engage in skillful, learner-centered practice (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

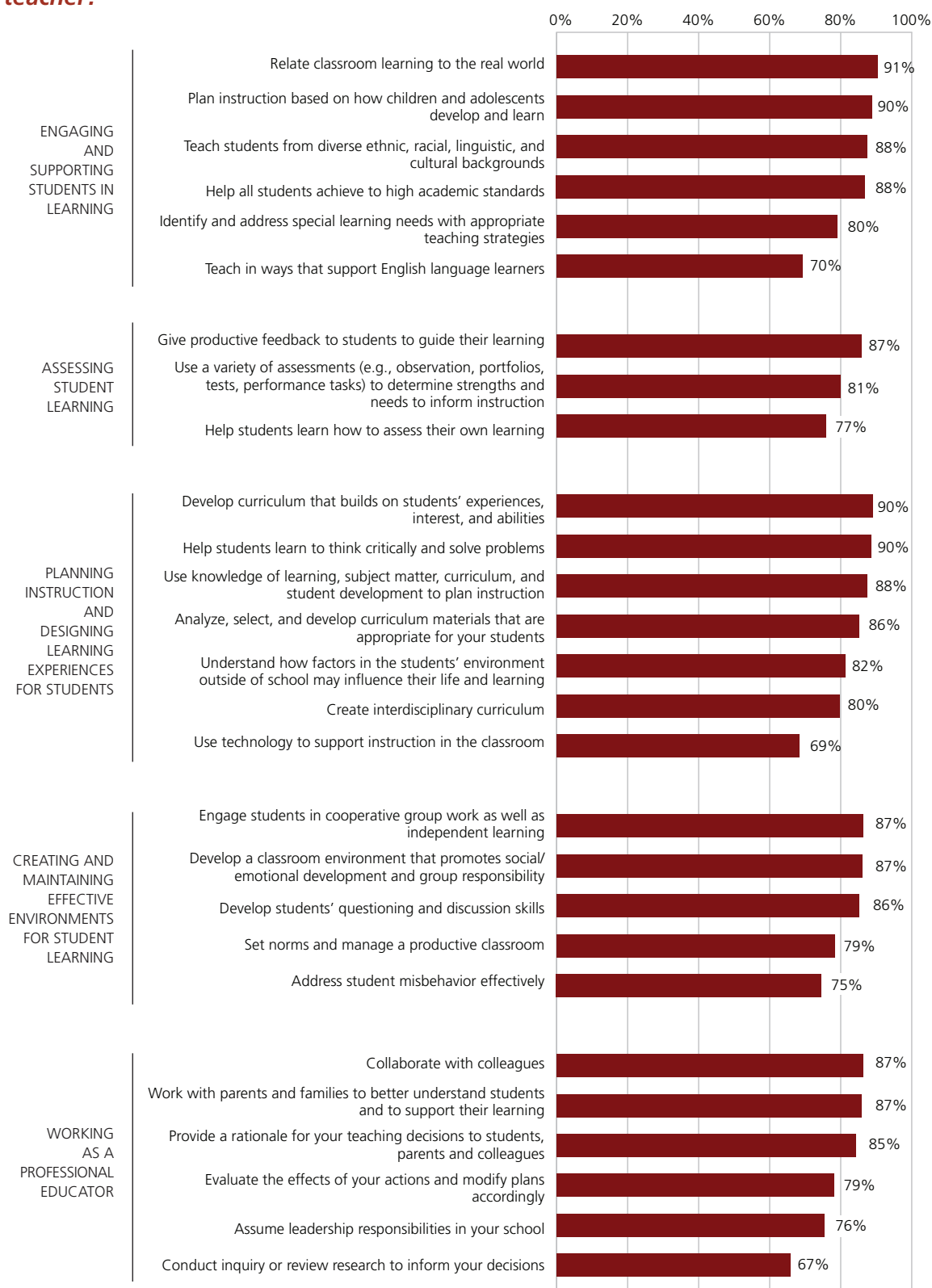
Figure 11 (next page) demonstrates how well prepared employers think Bank Street graduates are to engage in each of these activities, compared to other teachers with whom they have worked. **Across the teaching activities, the Employer Survey respondents rated Bank Street graduates as being “well” or “very well” prepared compared to other teachers.**

There are a significant number of teaching activities for which the employers note Bank Street graduates are particularly well prepared to engage. The Bank Street graduates were also more likely to rate themselves as “very well” prepared to engage in these same activities.

In their open-ended responses, employers described Bank Street graduates as being **very committed, motivated, passionate individuals; being reflective about their practice; and having philosophies and values that blended well with their occupational setting.** Employers appreciated that the Bank Street program had a “whole- child” orientation and instilled in its graduates a desire for ongoing professional growth. Respondents also frequently noted that graduates of Bank Street College make strong applicants and that their resumes are considered with great interest.

- In general, Bank Street Grads have a strong foundation in child development, are creative in their thinking, and thoughtful in their approach to students, families, and their classrooms. With that foundation, developing specific goals and implementing specific individualized goals and structured sequenced teaching techniques are more readily attained.
- Bank Street College maintains a solid reputation as a training ground for teachers in the progressive tradition. Interns and assistants come fully prepared in child development, valuing experiential learning, and motivated to join the noble profession.
- Having a Bank Street degree makes a teaching candidate’s resume stand out right away. I will always look carefully at a Bank Street graduate.

Figure 11. Percentages of Employers Who Responded “Well” or “Very Well” to Survey Question: *Compared to other teachers with whom you have worked, how well prepared are Bank Street College graduates to do each of the following as a teacher?*



Analysis of Pupil Learning Gains

Experienced Bank Street teachers (those with more than 2 years of teaching) demonstrate greater value-added to student test scores in English language arts than other experienced teachers in New York City.

In an effort to evaluate the potential impact of Bank Street teachers on student learning gains, we compared NYC DOE teachers who are graduates of Bank Street College with NYC DOE teachers who are not, using student–teacher linked data provided by the NYC DOE. Our value-added modeling (VAM) analyses focused on examining whether graduating from a Bank Street College teaching program is a significant predictor of student achievement gains on New York State English language arts (ELA) and mathematics (math) exams in grades 4–8. Put another way, we were interested in the influence of teachers who were prepared at Bank Street College on students’ state test scores compared to their colleagues who did not graduate from Bank Street College.

We approach this analysis acknowledging the appropriate cautions that scholars, policy makers, practitioners, and the public should apply to judgments about individuals or groups of teachers based on the use of value-added modeling for educational assessments and accountability. As noted by the recent policy statement of the American Statistical Association (2014), a research summary by the Economic Policy Institute (Baker et al., 2010), and numerous others in the field,² there are a number of known problems with the use of value-added methods to draw inferences about teacher effects. Most fundamental is the fact that it is impossible to fully disentangle the influences of individual teachers from those of other factors (administrative leadership, curriculum, class size, school resources, other teachers and tutors, parents, unmeasured student attributes, and so on). In addition, VAM metrics have been shown to be unstable from year to year, test to test, and course to course, and to be inaccurate for teachers whose students are above or below grade level, especially when using state tests that are required, by federal law, to measure only grade-level content.

As noted earlier, the vast majority of Bank Street graduates teach in early-childhood contexts, either in preschool or early elementary grades. However, we needed to limit our sample to students in grades 4–8 because state test score data are available only in grades 3–8. (Scores in grade 3 are used to provide a base for estimating value-added for grade 4.) In addition, we needed to limit our data to 5 consecutive school years (2005–06 through 2009–10) because those were the only years for which NYC DOE had verified that the student-teacher linkage data were accurate.

² See Briggs and Domingue (2011); Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, and Rothstein (2012); Haertel (2013); Lockwood et al (2007); Loeb and Candelaria (2012); McCaffrey (2013); Newton, Darling-Hammond, Haertel, and Thomas (2010); Raudenbush (2014); Raudenbush and Willms (1995); Rothstein (2007); and Sass (2008).

We eliminated from our sample students who had more than one teacher, because we could not distinguish the contributions of more than one teacher teaching the same students in a single school year (and could not know the duration of each teacher's assignment); and we limited our sample to students who were not in self-contained special education classrooms because grade-level tests are typically invalid for students who perform well below grade level, as is typical for those in self-contained special education classrooms. While the NYC DOE provided us with data for 170,065 teachers and 2,547,974 students, after restricting the sample to the appropriate grade levels and students, we were ultimately only able to use data for 23,014 teachers and 638,760 students. Bank Street teaching programs have had 4,979 graduates over the past 14 years; however, for the reasons described above and in more detail in Appendix A, only 322 of them are represented in our final sample.

We recognize that this group is not representative of Bank Street graduates, many more of whom are teachers of younger children than those in this sample. In addition, because of the strength of its special education programs, many Bank Street graduates likely teach in self-contained special education programs, and they may also teach in classrooms specifically designed for co-teaching. Because of these concerns about the representativeness of the sample and the complexities associated with value-added modeling, we urge caution in interpreting the results of our VAM analyses for this study.

Our models include student-level demographic variables to control for the influence of student characteristics on students' ELA and math performance. We specifically control for student gender, ethnicity, eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch, status as an English language learner, status as a special education student, whether or not the student was retained, and the number of days a student was present in a given school year. We also control for grade level in our models because the New York State standardized tests are grade-specific, and we include a student test score lag variable to control for students' prior achievement. It should be noted that the student characteristics included in our models collectively account for a significant proportion of the variance in student test scores, about 57% for ELA and 66% for math. This means that more than half of the variation in student test scores can be attributed to the characteristics of the student, such as gender and ethnicity. Teacher variables (experience and preparation program) explain only about 2% of the additional variance, with teacher experience accounting for most of that small proportion.

For our VAM analyses, we developed regression models to predict whether student achievement is related to teacher characteristics (specifically, being a Bank Street graduate and teaching experience). We developed two different types of models: main effect and interaction models.

- The main effect models independently examine interaction terms, which means that we independently examined how student test

scores are related to having a Bank Street teacher and how student test scores are related to having an experienced teacher (that is, a teacher with two or more years of experience). We first compared all the Bank Street graduates with all the non-Bank Street graduates in our sample. Then we compared all the experienced teachers with all the nonexperienced teachers in our sample.

- The interaction models allow us to examine whether the relationship between having a Bank Street teacher and student test scores is dependent upon a teacher's experience. In other words, we are interested in whether being prepared by Bank Street matters differentially earlier in a teacher's career versus later. We first compared Bank Street and non-Bank Street teachers with less than 2 years of experience. Then we compared Bank Street and non-Bank Street teachers with 2 or more years of experience.

Our main effect models demonstrate that there is not a statistically significant relationship between student test scores and whether the student was taught by a Bank Street graduate or not (in either ELA or math). Results of the main effect models suggest that, as anticipated, prior-year test scores and student demographic characteristics account for the lion's share of influence on students' current-year scores. Interestingly, of all the factors we examined, student attendance is the single variable with the most significant effect on achievement in ELA and math. Teacher experience (more than 2 years of teaching experience) also has a large positive influence on student achievement in both subjects.

We did, however, find a significant relationship among our interaction models. Specifically, in ELA, there is a significant interaction effect between Bank Street status and experience, with **students taught by experienced Bank Street teachers (those with 2 or more years of teaching) outperforming those taught by non-Bank Street experienced teachers in New York City.** There is no interaction effect in mathematics.

In addition to teacher experience, the other teacher variable in our models found to have significant influence on student achievement was teacher certification. After controlling for student characteristics, student attendance, and prior achievement, we found that in both ELA and math, students taught by teachers with permanent or professional certificates significantly outperformed those taught by teachers with provisional or initial certificates. Relative to teacher experience and certification, graduating from a specific teacher-preparation program, such as Bank Street, appears to make less difference in student achievement outcomes, as evaluated through this methodology.

Summary

An analysis of employment and retention patterns of Bank Street College of Education graduates indicates that Bank Street graduates are most commonly employed in public and private schools in New York City and tend to teach pre-school and early elementary school grades. Bank Street graduates stay in teaching at higher than average rates and are professionally active. Based on an analysis of a range of data sources, the evidence suggests that Bank Street College offers high-quality, effective preparation for teachers.

Bank Street graduates report high levels of satisfaction with their preparation and sense of readiness for the challenges of the teaching profession. Graduates note that their preparation programs were anchored in a developmental orientation to teaching and a rich tradition of a progressive philosophy of education. Bank Street graduates rate the caliber of course instruction highly and view coursework as meaningful, practical, and authentic. Bank Street programs offer clinically rich experiences as part of supervised fieldwork. Additionally, Bank Street produces teachers who are well prepared for and engaged in skillful, learner-centered practices. Employers report a high degree of satisfaction with the teacher preparation provided by Bank Street College. And, while results of analyses of pupil learning gains should be read with a degree of caution, as described in detail above, our analysis indicates that experienced Bank Street teachers demonstrate greater value-added to student test scores in English language arts than other experienced teachers in New York City.



Cross-Cutting Themes: Influences of Bank Street Preparation and the Bank Street Developmental-Interaction Approach

We have assumed for many years that, beyond the structured curriculum that is provided, the students internalize the pervasive qualities of the learning environment we try to create for them, that the qualitative characteristics of their own teaching styles will reflect, later, the qualities of their own personal experience in learning to become teachers. (Biber, 1973)

Barbara Biber (1972), an early and longtime Bank Street faculty member and institutional leader, believed that developmentally oriented schools are environments where one can find “children learning actively, interacting with each other, taking initiative, finding pleasure in accomplishment and creative expression, with teachers who were enthusiastic and who established a generally democratic style of school life” (p. 52). That same orientation animates the approach to teacher preparation at Bank Street College both historically and contemporarily: Bank Street strives to prepare teachers in a context that emulates the kind of educational experiences the faculty members hope their graduates can provide for their own students. They do so with a guiding framework, the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach, that provides a foundation and orientation for effective practice, and they aim to develop educators who are independent and critical practitioners, engaged in purposeful habits of inquiry and reflection, with a capacity to bridge principles of effective practice with the needs of local contexts.

In his book tracing the history of teacher education at Bank Street, Jaime Grinberg (2005) quotes a document from 1935 that describes the nature of how teachers and administrators are educated at Bank Street not only with a useful preparation for teaching and learning, but also with an orientation to successfully negotiate the needs of evolving contexts and circumstances with the principles of the Bank Street approach: “None of us is leaving Bank Street with a packet of ideas neatly sealed and ready to be pigeon-holed. We all have the feeling that given the Cooperative School as a Springboard, there is no limit to where one can leap” (p. 24).

The unfolding work of reorienting and reinvigorating the Bank Street approach in conversation and the connection with the needs of local contexts were evident in the classrooms and schools of the Bank Street graduates and their colleagues

at Midtown West School, Brooklyn New School, and Community Roots Charter School, the Bank Street-affiliated schools that were the subject of our extended case studies. Through interviews, analysis of documents and artifacts, as well as extended observations of classroom practice, we explored the nature and substance of the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach, guided by the following questions:

1. What does the practice of Bank Street graduates look like in the classroom?
2. In what ways is the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach in evidence at the classroom and the school level?
3. How is the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach being adapted in this particular context?

As articulated in more detail in Appendix A, by design we conducted our classroom and school case studies in three schools with close ties and connections to Bank Street. Our aim was to observe and describe in rich detail the Bank Street approach in practice, and we presumed that such schools would provide the best context within which Bank Street graduates would be afforded the opportunity to engage in practices that resonated with their preparation. Thus what follows should be understood as descriptive analyses. The graduates and schools with whom we worked are exemplars of the Bank Street approach.

In the next sections, we explore the primary themes that emerged across the various elements of our studies. We bring together the results of our surveys and case studies, with an emphasis on describing the Bank Street approach in action in the classrooms of Bank Street graduates. The following crosscutting themes illustrate how the preparatory experiences and classroom practices of graduates from Bank Street teacher preparation programs are connected:

- **Approach to students** with an emphasis on play and child development, observation and reflection, meetings and conferences, process-orientated learning, and regarding students as young scholars
- **Approach to curriculum** with an emphasis on the centrality of integrated social studies, engaging with outside-of-school environments through purposeful field trips, arts infusion, and content learning through collaborative inquiry
- **Approach to the world** with an emphasis on connections to family and fostering community, commitment to diversity and inclusivity, teacher professionalism and collaboration, and teaching for the public good

- **Liliana: A Bank Street graduate in action**, an in-depth look at the classroom practices of Bank Street graduate Liliana, who puts the developmental-interaction approach to work in her kindergarten classroom at the Brooklyn New School

Approach to Students

The school as a social institution has broad responsibility for the development of the whole person—his affective and social as well as his intellectual development. The quality of experience in school can have a differentiated impact not only on the proficiency of intellectual functioning but in shaping the feelings, the attitudes, the values, the sense of self, the images of good and evil in the world about and the vision of what the life of man with man might be. True, the school is only one part of a constellation of influences: the family, the impact of poverty and discrimination, the prevalence of market-place values in our society, but it dare not forsake its responsibility nor lose sight of the extent of its potency. (Biber, 1973)

The Bank Street developmental-interaction approach to teaching and learning centers on understanding, valuing, and meeting the needs of the “whole person.” The approach “recognizes that children learn best when they are actively engaged both intellectually and emotionally with materials, ideas and people” (Bank Street College of Education, 2014a). Shapiro and Nager (2000) identify the key concepts as:

the changing patterns of growth, understanding, and response that characterize children and adults as they develop; and the dual meaning of interaction as, first, the interconnected spheres of thought and emotion, and, equally, the importance of engagement with the environment of children, adults, and the material world. (p. 11)

Educators who take on the developmental-interaction approach to teaching recognize that students’ development unfolds at varying paces and through interaction with the world. Bank Street defines its approach as

the ways in which cognition and emotion are always interconnected in any teaching situation. Meaningful content (provided by a teacher) and active relationships and collaborations with student peers and teachers provide the basis for learning. By closely observing the reactions, reflections, and interactions of students; by guiding with her own comments and questions; and by encouraging every ounce of student curiosity, the educator teaches her students. (Bank Street College of Education, 2014g)

The developmental-interaction approach is central to the preparation graduate students receive at the Bank Street College of Education. A preponderance of graduates (99% of respondents on the Teaching Program Survey) characterizes Bank Street as focusing on a developmental, child-centered approach to education. This emphasis is widely extolled, as one graduate of the program explains:

My early childhood–childhood master’s program at Bank Street was phenomenal. Rather than simply focusing on the curriculum content or how to write and teach a lesson plan, I was taught how children grow and learn. I gained an understanding of child development and how to design developmentally appropriate activities that are open-ended and inspire the child to create his or her own understanding of the world.

Integrating an awareness of child development with instruction is fundamental to the teaching practices we observed in the classrooms of Bank Street graduates. Students engage with curricular materials and activities meaningful to their personal interests, unique curiosities, and individual cognitive and social–emotional growth. Teachers design learning experiences that involve play, emphasize process, and ultimately develop young children as intellectual, curious scholars who eagerly interact with the world around them. Through such practice, Bank Street graduates, and the Bank Street–affiliated schools in our study, enact and embody elements of the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach to teaching and learning. As one teacher at a school we visited explained: “Kids are allowed to be themselves. We focus on each individual child from where they are, and where they need to go.”

Play and child development: Meeting children where they are

*“La lechuza,
la lechuza
hace shhhhh
hace shhhhh,
¿Cómo la lechuza?
¿Cómo la lechuza?
hace shhhhh
hace shhhhh.”*

Liliana sits on the rug, beating bongos and leading the students in this Argentine children’s song as they make their way from early-morning activities to the meeting area. Once everyone is gathered in a circle, Liliana hits a few more beats,

gradually fading out the drumming sound, signaling a transition to the meeting's opening.

Next to Liliana stands an easel that holds a pocket chart. On the left-hand side of each row of the chart is an icon that represents each of the activity centers in the classroom: blocks, writing, puppets, water table, painting, and more. Next to each of the activity center icons is a number card.

Liliana calls one of her students to join her at the head of the circle. Gina, wearing a long-sleeve flower-print shirt, stands and walks over to the easel. Liliana then asks Gina how many children are allowed at each of the centers.

As Gina begins calling out the centers and reading the numbers, other students start to chime in with voices louder than hers.

"I can't hear Gina, because everyone's saying the numbers!" Jessie calls out.

"You're right!" Liliana nods to Jessie, and then looks dramatically to Gina. The students refocus their attention to Liliana and Gina.

"Let's take turns," Gina suggests. "I'll say it first and then everyone can say the numbers." Gina proceeds to read the numbers aloud. She then looks to the class and says, "Your turn." Gina points to each number and guides the class in a choral reading.

Liliana, beaming, turns to the group and asks, "Did that work?"

Everyone exclaims, "Yes!"

Liliana then looks at Gina, cueing her to sit in a chair by the easel and hold a basket full of small squares that have students' headshots on them.

"Jamie."

"Rose."

"Eli."

"Raul."

As Gina calls out names, her peers go up to take their pictures and place them in the pocket chart hanging on the easel. They put their headshots next to the icons signaling the center at which they would like to go for work time. During work time, students engage in play activities aimed at fostering their holistic development, including cognitive, physical, and social-emotional.

The room begins to fill with the buzz of active and engaged children, as a number of activities commence simultaneously:

- *Several students pull out stethoscopes and imagine that they are doctors.*
- *Some children use plastic shovels and buckets to figure out how they can drain water out of the water table.*
- *Two girls draw an intricate outdoor scene with markers on a giant sheet of Plexiglas.*
- *A group of students standing at a rectangular table sing together, “Everybody dance now,” as they paint watercolor portraits of sea life, as part of the class’s extended Shore Study.*
- *At the block activity center, two girls begin stacking rectangular blocks to create a large structure.*

The energy is high as students joyfully interact with each other during work time. Children are free to move their picture to a different center whenever they want, so long as they do not exceed the number of students allowed at each station.

Play is an important part of the developmental-interaction approach, as it gives children an opportunity to explore their emotions, ideas, and creativity in symbolic form. The value of play as “the work of little ones” is something that Liliana learned during her time at Bank Street. Work time in Liliana and Yazmin’s class is regarded as an essential component of their kindergarten curriculum. Each play activity is connected in some way to the broad range of human development and academic learning the teachers aim to foster. Work time is not the only time play occurs within the curriculum, but it is also a sacred time set aside each day when students know they will be able to make independent choices, pursue particular interests, and let their imaginations run freely.

According to Margery B. Franklin (2000), the founders of Bank Street viewed the developmental-interactive approach as being

grounded in a theory of the developing child. In addition, educational practice was informed by an implicit theory of symbolization—namely, the idea that recasting experience in symbolic form (as in play) is not only a matter of expression but a prime means for consolidating, extending, and creating knowledge...Psychoanalytic thinking, primarily in the form of ego psychology, emphasized the functions of play as a pathway for personal expression and growth, a means for gaining emotional insight and resolving conflict. (pp. 47–48)

Play Techniques for Early Childhood Settings, one of several current Bank Street

courses on play techniques, has the following description, which builds on the same themes (Bank Street College of Education, 2014b):

Bank Street College promotes childhood play as a critical component of all children's development. Play is a child's primary mode of expression and of learning about the world. In this course, a variety of play techniques are introduced, such as child-centered play and the Floortime™ approach. Participants explore and practice techniques that promote self-regulation, self-esteem, mastery, and social, emotional, and cognitive development in typically developing children, as well as in children with special needs. This course is appropriate for general and special education teachers, parents, caregivers, child life specialists, social workers, therapists, and counselors.

Because play helps young children develop intellectually as well as socially and emotionally, it has always been a central component to the developmental-interaction approach. Children can use play to create their own small worlds where they practice expressing their individual narratives and working out conflicts. As Anne Tobias, who teaches 4- and 5-year-olds at the Bank Street School for Children, explains, when engaged in play, “children can actively try out their thoughts and feelings in a way that seems real or almost real in the moment but exists with an understood degree of separation from reality” (Tobias, 2014).



This idea that play is a safe space where students can learn about themselves, their peers, and the world on both an intellectual and social-emotional level inspires Liliana to see play as, “what [children] do; it’s like their work.” This is something she discovered as a graduate student at Bank Street: through play, “children develop socially, cognitively...it helped children problem-solve. There are so many areas that play just supports the growth in all of these different developmental areas.”

In an era of education with an intensive focus on testing and accountability within a narrow range of academic skills, there is concern that the developmental orientation praised by Bank Street alumni and their employers is on the wane in schools across the nation. In a recent New York Times Op-Ed, Bank Street College President Shael Polakow-Suransky and longtime faculty member Nancy Nager commented on the recent push to replace play in early childhood classrooms with skill-focused academic tasks. They wrote:

Worried teachers talk about how the pressure to achieve good outcomes on the third-grade state exams has been trickling down to early childhood classrooms in the form of work sheets, skill drills and other developmentally inappropriate methods....

We do not need to pick between play and academic rigor.

While grown-ups recognize that pretending helps children find their way into the world, many adults think of play as separate from formal learning. The reality is quite different. As they play, children develop vital cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional skills. They make discoveries, build knowledge, experiment with literacy and math and learn to self-regulate and interact with others in socially appropriate ways. Play is also fun and interesting, which makes school a place where children look forward to spending their time. It is so deeply formative for children that it must be at the core of our early childhood curriculum. (Polakow-Suransky & Nager, 2014)

In other words, incorporating time for play helps teachers support the whole child. According to the teachers at the various Bank Street-affiliated schools we visited, supporting the whole child means providing them with developmentally oriented learning experiences that meet children where they are. As Denise, a K-1 teacher at Midtown West, told us:

They are learning through their best way, and they’re really creating that meaning for themselves and with our support. Like when we do goal setting at the beginning of the year, we sit down with the kids, 5-year-olds, 4-year-olds, and say, “What do you want to do this year? What do you want to learn?” And what they really want to learn,

what we're capable of teaching them, is the focus of what we do in school. So if it's tying your shoelace or getting dressed by yourself, those are things that can be embedded in the work that we do, and that becomes meaningful for them, and it makes it more meaningful for us to have those little successes each year. So I think that because we really value where the child is and bring them up to that next step at their own pace in their own time...that makes us, I think, very similar to Bank Street in that way, where it really is child-centered.

Such child-centered learning, which caters to the needs and interests of individual children as they develop cognitively and socially, is regarded as necessary to make learning meaningful for students. In the words of Jane, a fourth grade teacher at Community Roots Charter School, "That comes from the work that they do at Bank Street...keeping it really child-centered, and meeting them wherever they are...So if [the students] are just not there yet,...you stay there until they are there, 'cause that is the only way that it really makes sense." Whether through play or other developmentally meaningful practices, teachers who adhere to Bank Street's developmental-interaction approach see that the only type of teaching that "makes sense" is the kind that meets the whole child where that child is—cognitively, socially, and emotionally.

Observation and Reflection: Connecting Instruction to Student Strengths, Interests, and Needs

"What can we play?" Liliana asks a group of five students—Christy, Larry, Darla, Dennis, and Nina—while holding a small whiteboard.

As she begins to write the words "Play Plan" on the whiteboard, Christy offers, "We can have a mommy! Can I write my name for mommy?" Larry and Nina nod at Christy, who writes her name next to the word "mommy" that Liliana has written on the board in blue dry-erase marker.

Larry rests his head on his fist and says, "How about 'D',' D' for doctor?" Liliana writes "doctor" on the board.

"Yeah! And 'D' for daddy!" Nina says, turning to Larry with a smile.

"Or 'D' for Darla and 'D' for Dennis!" Darla joins in on the excitement of coming up with characters that could start with the letter "D".

"You're really thinking about that letter," Liliana says to the children with one hand on her waist and an earnest look on her face. "How did you guys get so good at being detectives?"

Darla replies, "We took out our detective eye," as she smiles coyly.

“I don’t like doctors,” Nina says looking warily at the stethoscope that Larry has pulled out from a plastic bin full of materials for pretend play. The students start to share reasons why they don’t like doctors, the most popular reason being that they give shots.

“Let’s build a house!” Dennis suggests.

“Let’s use the hollow blocks to build a house,” Liliana says in response to Dennis’s idea. “I see this open space here.” The children walk over to a large shelf against the wall and begin carrying the hollow blocks over to an open space between two tables.

Once the students are launched into their play, Liliana grabs her red Moleskin notebook, a pencil, and her coffee. She sits on the floor and observes the students as they engage in pretend play, taking notes about the things she observes. Every now and then, she inserts herself in the play and participates. When Larry brings a large plastic syringe over to Liliana and puts the tip against her arm, Liliana calls out, “Oh, the doctor’s looking for a patient!” Hearing this, Dennis and Nina rush over to Larry to tell him that the dad is sick. Larry then begins examining Dennis, while Darla pulls out other materials from the shelves to use for this imaginary scenario. Liliana continues to record notes as she observes the children.

A primary component of the Bank Street College graduate program involves helping teacher candidates appreciate the value of closely observing children. For Liliana, observations during play are particularly significant because they provide a window into her students’ lives and help her see the world from their eyes. Liliana first learned to value close observation of children during her time at Bank Street. She describes the in-depth observations of children she regularly made as part of her coursework at Bank Street. Liliana explains, “It really gave us a chance to really experience what some of these little ones might be going through, and also, as an observer, to just step back and have all these areas in mind and these possible things that you might want to try, and also the space to just try out.”

Bank Street’s founder, Mitchell, believed that observing students made it possible for teachers to organize learning experiences that were guided by moves students made and interests they expressed. Mitchell (1934/2001) writes about an observer–teacher, “She gathers this information in order to place the children in strategic positions for making explorations...in order to use her environment as a laboratory” (p. 16).

In the book chapter “Learning to Look Closely at Children: A Necessary Tool for Teachers,” Haberman (2000) explains that careful observation of children was a “priority for Bank Street teachers and researchers from the start” (p. 203). She writes that “teaching requires an understanding and appreciation of a child as a unique individual,” which calls for “learning to look directly and carefully at the children in her own classroom” so as to enhance “a teacher’s ability to make

appropriate curricular choices” (p. 204). Such careful observation involves detailed recording of notes full of vivid language, ongoing reflection that allows teachers to make tentative hypotheses, and grappling with assumptions as teachers interpret students’ behavior to draw conclusions about the data gathered. These are all important skills that Liliana reported having learned during her time at Bank Street, where “every single course had that [observational] component to it.”

Liliana’s observations help her strategically insert herself in the children’s play so as to enhance their playful experimentation and learning opportunities in the classroom laboratory. She says the act of observing children helps her make useful adjustments in her plans and practice. As she explains:

I would say one thing I usually do during my [students’] play is I really sit and observe and take notes. During playtime I wear two hats. I take on the role of the observer and facilitator, where I’ll sit and observe and take notes. And then I sometimes see myself as like a wandering shadow, picking and choosing when to step in and when to step out, which is not easy. When is it appropriate to jump in? And when can they be left to develop their own play? This is a skill that I continue to work on and that requires practice. But I make my decisions by observing, and if I see a pattern, we try to create space to talk about it—what worked, what didn’t work.

Liliana regularly uses her observation notes and reflections to shape and sharpen her instructional plans and interactions with students. It is an essential feature of her professional repertoire.

Note-taking is particularly important in the observation process, as it provides time for reflection. As Liliana explains, “When you observe kids in the dramatic play or pretend, or throughout the day, and you make your observations, then you also have to leave some time to think about what you observed.” While reflecting, teachers begin to notice patterns in their students’ behavior and can come to understand them on a deeper level. Further, they can consider making adjustments in their practice to better support the whole child. The Bank Street graduates we interviewed said the practice of closely observing children and reflecting on those observations made up a critical aspect of their Bank Street preparation that has become central to their own work:

Something that came out of my Bank Street education is really thinking hard about children and observing children, being keen observers of children, taking notes on their behavior in their activities and responding to that.

—Oliver, Community Roots Charter School teacher

And just a lot of work on how to really look at what's going in your classroom. How to reflect. How to look at all the children. How to step back. And, a lot of training and just taking anecdotal notes and doing observational O&R—observation and recording—and seeing what you observed and then how that informs your teaching.

—Darren, Midtown West School teacher

I learned from Bank Street just how important it is to monitor each child and really be an observer as a teacher. That's when I can, when there's time to talk to Joan, be like, "This is what I noticed about Sebastian. This really helps him, and this really does not help him. And we need to change this and that and whatnot. These are the kids that really benefit from a previewing or whatnot"...And a lot of that for me comes through just constant observation and reflection.

—Jody, Community Roots Charter School teacher

Bank Street preparation in the developmental-interaction approach. When the early faculty members of Bank Street were determining the curriculum for the teacher preparation program, they knew that one of the major areas of personal and professional development they wanted to organize their courses around was "learning about children" (Grinberg, 2005, p. 28). They developed a series of courses that all student teachers were required to take. Included in this group of classes were the child development and the observation and recording courses, which are still part of the core curriculum at Bank Street today. These two courses were designed to go hand in hand. As Grinberg (2005) explains: "the child development class provided the theoretical perspectives and frameworks to think about what it was that the observational data [from the observation course] provided" (p. 36). The idea was that by preparing student teachers to closely observe children, they would learn, as Biber writes, to "see what the child is like before [they] figure out what his education should be" (as cited in Grinberg, 2005, p. 35). Together, the child development and observation and record-taking courses were designed to give student teachers an understanding of how child development connected to the art of teaching. The current course descriptions for these two classes at Bank Street demonstrate their complementary nature:

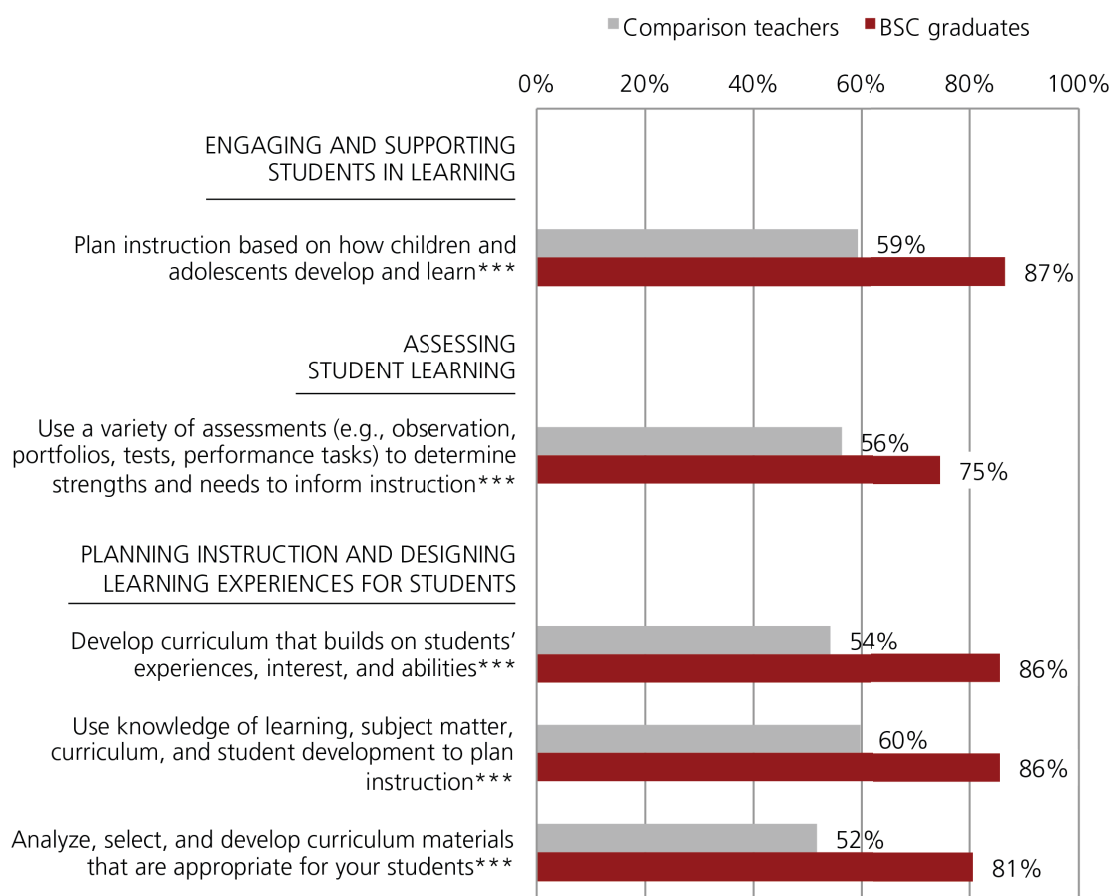
Child Development: In this course we will examine the interactions among the cognitive, social, emotional, linguistic, and physical development of children from infancy into adolescence. We will pay close attention to children as makers of meaning in the contexts of their development, including family, school, socio-economic class, and culture. Through reading classic and current literature, we will attend to some of the larger questions about development, such as the relation-

ship between nature and nurture, the role of developmental theory, and the tension between the search for developmental universals and the reality of individual differences. The goal is to make developmental theory vibrant and meaningful so that the generalized theoretical child comes to enhance and inform how one understands individual children. (Bank Street College of Education, 2014b)

The Study of Children in Diverse and Inclusive Settings through Observation and Recording: Students learn to use a variety of observational approaches and recording techniques as basic assessment tools to increase their understanding of and skill in planning for children who are developing normally, as well as for children with disabilities and special needs. Through observing cognitive functioning (stage and style), social-emotional behaviors, motor ability, and the interplay between the individual child and the group, as well as the individual child and adults, students become aware of how specific behaviors yield insight into the overall life of the child. Students will use their observations to reflect on possible curriculum and classroom adaptations that would allow the children to build on their strengths and better meet their challenges. An additional goal is to help students, as participant observers, to develop greater sensitivity to their own feelings and interactions with children, and to consider how these affect the selection, omission and interpretation of observable data. Emphasis is placed on a growing sensitivity to what is “subjective” and what attempts to be “objective” observation. Each student conducts an in-depth study of a child. (Bank Street College of Education, 2014b)

These courses and others that emphasize the developmental-interaction approach support Bank Street graduates so that they leave their teacher preparation program confident in their ability to design and implement developmentally oriented instruction. As evidenced in our surveys of program graduates and comparison teachers, Bank Street graduates are also more comfortable developing curricula that center on students’ unique interests and learning needs than their peers from other teacher preparation programs. Additionally, graduates report feeling more adept at using a variety of assessments, including observation, to inform their instructional practices (see Figure 12, next page).

Figure 12. Percentages of Bank Street Graduates and Comparison Teachers Who Responded “Well” or “Very Well” to Survey Question: *How well did your teacher preparation program prepare you to do each of the following as a teacher?*



Note. Significance of comparison of item means of Bank Street College graduates versus comparison teachers indicated next to item: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Responses by alumni on the Teaching Program Survey further convey how the Bank Street teaching program had a meaningful impact on graduates' ability to integrate the developmental-interaction approach into their current teaching practices. Alumni speak highly of the preparation they received, especially in the child development and observation and recording courses, which taught them how to support the whole child through close observation and instruction that is responsive to students' developmental patterns:

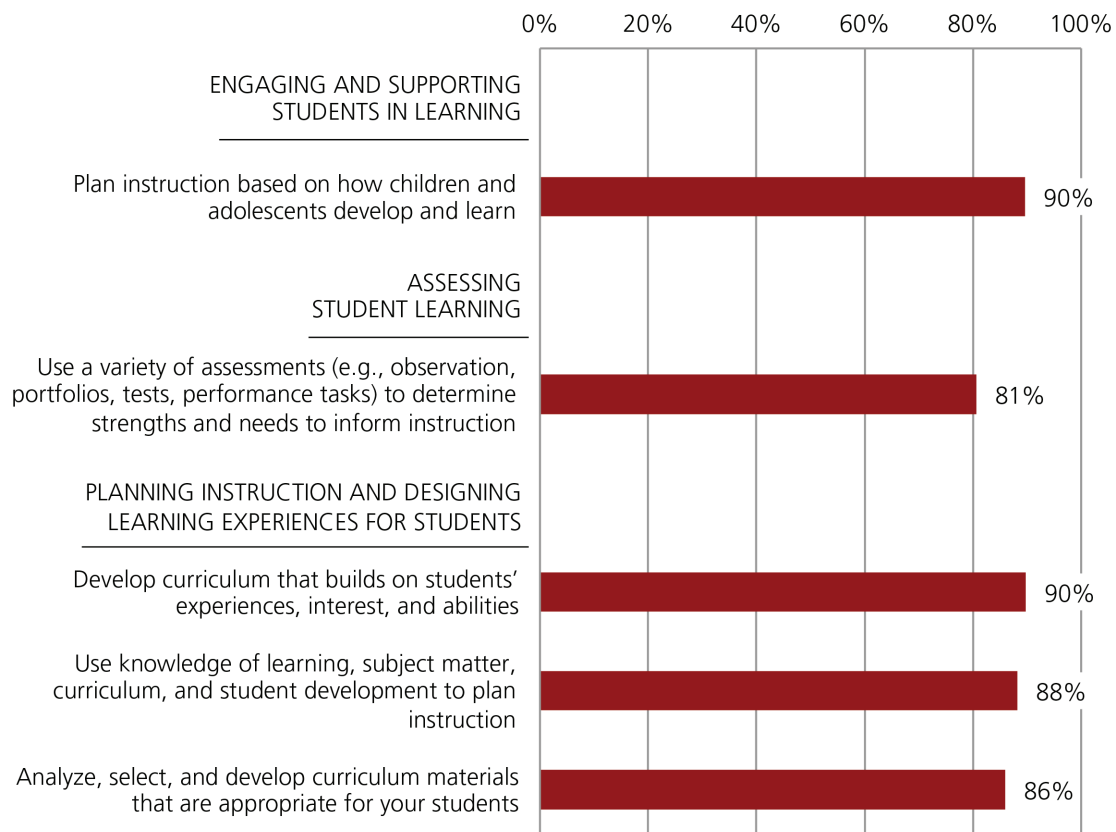
- I developed a strong sense of developmentally appropriate practice at Bank Street. I have been able to apply this knowledge to all of my jobs in education. I also used this knowledge to create engaging, meaningful, and appropriate curriculum for young children. I do

not think I would have received this strong foundation at another graduate school. I am grateful that I was able to attend such a strong program.

- I found Bank Street to be an outstanding institution for educating teachers, far exceeding the common perceptions about teacher training preparation. They are very strongly focused on the child's developmental level, and how to engage a child with meaningful, age-appropriate, firsthand experiences and curriculum.

Employers also express feeling confidence in Bank Street graduates' ability to engage and support students, assess student learning, plan instruction, and design learning opportunities based on students' experiences, interests, and abilities (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. Percentages of Employers Who Responded "Well" or "Very Well" to Survey Question: *Compared to other teachers with whom you have worked, how well prepared are Bank Street College graduates to do each of the following as a teacher?*



Employers also praise the preparation in child development that Bank Street graduates receive. This is an aspect of the program that they report makes Bank Street graduates particularly desirable hires:

- Bank Street College students/graduates are generally very well prepared, and work effectively within our setting. They have a good developmental understanding of the students, frame curriculum that is interdisciplinary in nature and which takes into consideration the students' learning styles, life experiences and social-emotional development. Their training and core values as educators resonate with our school's philosophy, which is rooted in progressive education. They have a fundamental understanding of what it means to educate "the whole child," and value an experiential approach to learning. They have been trained well in assessing outcomes and in differentiating instruction appropriately.
- Over the years, I have had direct knowledge [of] and experience with Bank Street students and graduates...I find Bank Street students to be enthusiastic, well prepared, reflective, and eager to learn. They understand the importance of looking at the whole child when thinking about how best to meet their needs. When I see on a resume that a candidate is either in [the Bank Street College graduate] program or has graduated from it, I am interested right away.

These employers associate a graduate degree and certification from Bank Street College with a solid understanding of developmentally oriented practice that meets children where they are and fosters constructive learning and growth. In the view of employers we surveyed, Bank Street graduates teach children in a way that encourages individual and integrated cognitive, social, and emotional development—all consistent with the developmental-interaction approach.

Meetings and Conferences: Supporting Student Learning and Building Community

*In Johanna's third grade classroom at Midtown West School, students are engaged in a span of silent reading. There are 28 students spread across the room occupying every nook, cranny, and corner of the space. Johanna moves around the room with a clipboard and a pad of sticky notes. She sidles up to a student splayed out on the rug. The student is wearing a bright yellow T-shirt with a daisy imprinted on the back. She is a restless reader and has been scooting around on the rug, all the while reading *Who was Abraham Lincoln?**

"Destiny, how are you doing with the book?" asks Johanna. Destiny looks up and gives a half-hearted thumb waggle. "Hmmm," says Johanna kneeling down next

to her. Destiny moves from her pretzel-position on her back to sitting cross-legged. Johanna says, “I know that we decided you would try a nonfiction book because you have been reading so much fiction.” Destiny nods.

Johanna writes something down on her clipboard. “I know how much you love fiction. When you are reading fiction what draws you in?” Destiny smiles and says, “I love adventure.” There is a long pause as Johanna waits for Destiny to say more. Destiny looks down, plays with her laces. After nearly 10 seconds, Johanna asks, “So I’m hearing that you like to read adventure, tell me about some specific adventures that capture you.” Destiny nods and says, “I like when people go searching for other people or they go after a treasure or on a journey.”

“So it sounds like you’re into when people pursue things either outside themselves or when they go after personal goals,” says Johanna.

Destiny nods again and says, “I guess Abe Lincoln sort of did that, too.”

Johanna smiles broadly. “Yes, you are making a very good observation. If you read a nonfiction biography, you can often discover how the person has a life of adventure and pursues success. I’ll tell you what,” Johanna then pulls off a few sticky notes. “I want you to take these sticky notes and go through the parts that you have read to see if you can find moments when Abe Lincoln was on an adventure.”

Destiny takes the sticky notes and carefully places them over Abe Lincoln’s face on the cover and starts leafing through the book. Johanna stays seated cross-legged next to her, jotting notes on her clipboard.

“Johanna!” Destiny smiles and points to a section in the book. “Here is an example,” and she reads, “Abraham finished with school for good at the age of 15. Altogether, he had gone for only about a year. But he learned how to read. Now he could teach himself anything he wanted. He read every book he could find. He once walked 20 miles to borrow one.”

After a few more exchanges, Johanna gets up and says, “It was very nice to talk with you about your reading. I would like for you to find two more examples of adventure in the book. Can we find them by Wednesday? You can write them down.”

Destiny gives Johanna a more energetic thumbs-up and Johanna moves on. It was a 3-minute exchange between the two of them—a conversation about learning that was personal, relational, and focused on a child’s relationship to her learning. True to the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach, Johanna utilizes the relational and personal nature of her interactions with Destiny to connect the student more deeply and meaningfully to the academic content at the center of this lesson.

Meetings and conferences, particularly with an individual student or a small group, are a hallmark of instructional practice in schools and classrooms that reflect the Bank Street approach. At Midtown West—a school with deep, historical connections with Bank Street College—meetings and conferences take place throughout the day. For teachers who understand that learning and growth occurs through ongoing relational interaction and that each child is a singular, developing human being, deserving of support and encouragement, intensive one-on-one and small group meetings provide opportunities to work with a child’s unique strengths, interests, and needs. Interaction generally entails connecting with a student, listening deeply, and asking an ongoing series of open-ended questions. Through such meetings, teachers can slow down the pace and create space for student thought, reflection, and depth in ways that are appropriate to each student’s individual development.

In our classroom observations across the three focal schools, we noted a strong tendency of Bank Street graduates to orchestrate space, time, and opportunities for these individual and small group conferences. Teachers engaged in a constellation of highly personal interactions with students around the curriculum in order to help students learn and grow. Shapiro and Nager (2007) describe how the Bank Street approach works:

[B]ringing her deep understanding of the subject matter together with her understanding of each individual learner, the teacher guides children’s learning and the growth of knowledge by asking meaningful questions...The teacher is the key person, guiding children’s inquiry, making connections to academic fields of study, and providing continuity in experiences to facilitate and enable learning. (p. 14)

Johanna, a graduate of Bank Street College and a long-time teacher at Midtown West, says having one-on-one meetings with students is at the heart of her developmentally oriented teaching practice. She relies on these individual “conferences” to gather data that will guide her future instructional choices and plans:

If I go through a day and I don’t do that, I don’t feel that I’ve truly taught and checked in with the kids....I’m constantly conferring with children, because that’s helping me with my own planning, thinking about: “Okay, what do I need to do for tomorrow? Over the next week? What do I need to tweak? What is it that they’ve missed, or they’ve gotten, that I didn’t think about?”...My role at the start of the conference is: I do all the listening, trying to figure out, “Oh, what is [it] that’s going on here? And what is it that I can take from this so I can teach them?” And then their role is after they’ve taught me that they’re gonna listen to me, and we’re gonna come up together with something that they can work on. So I’m constantly thinking about, “What is it that I’m gonna teach them?”

Both Johanna and her students place serious learning value in these teacher–student meetings. As Johanna explains, “Sometimes they’ll come to me and go, ‘We need a conference.’...And I have now learned to use it through everything. We have math conferences, social studies conferences, reading conferences. They just know it’s ‘confer.’ We’re gonna confer. And confer is that time that’s one-to-one. Definitely one-to-one.”

In addition to a range of individual and small group gatherings, teachers who are Bank Street graduates also orchestrate a number of larger group meetings across the day. Class meetings are abundant at schools associated with the Bank Street approach. Most teachers begin the day with a class meeting, which provides a time for the teacher and students to formally greet one another and share personal news or outside-of-school connections to current topics of study. Meetings are also utilized regularly to build and shore up classroom norms and procedures, to collectively resolve conflicts or disagreements, and to actively engage and debate ideas. The tenor of these meetings reflects both patience and a deep respect for and belief in the value of the contributions the students make to the collective enterprise. A class meeting is a time when teachers and students work collectively to progress as a classroom learning community and to support important learning goals. A class meeting to start the day also offers opportunities for students to engage in activities that help prepare them for the rest of the school day, as is the case in this example from Community Roots Charter School:

We sit down on the edge of the meeting rug in a second grade classroom. A teacher in a bright-colored sundress and open-toed sandals calls the 25 students together by saying, “I know it’s hot outside, so let’s start by dreaming about going to live in a tree house. Let’s dream of a ‘tree house, a tree house, a secret you and me house.’”

She asks students to close their eyes and join her in a short visualization of what they might do in their own secret tree house. One little girl says she would read in the tree house. Another boy wearing a brightly colored orange and white New York Knicks jersey whispers with a serious head bob to his partner on the rug that he would “relax” in his tree house.

After a few minutes of facilitating students sharing their imagined activities in the tree house, the teacher begins a gentle transition to the school day and turns on a Smart Board projector that illuminates the class’s signature song. The children and teachers begin singing the classic Frank Sinatra homage to the bustling energy and promise of New York, “If I can make it there, I’ll make it anywhere; It’s up to you, New York, New York!” The voices strain with enthusiasm as they further celebrate New York as “...king of the hill, top of the list, head of the heap, A-number-one!

Such meetings are integral to fostering the type of classroom communities that Bank Street faculty members envision for the students of their graduates. Biber (1973) describes the essence of these learning encounters between teachers and students:

A classroom embodies a way of life among people. We attempt to build a social environment in which children are known and responded to as individuals, where the interaction between adult and child and between child and child is supportive of learning, and where the children come to identify with the teachers' goals for their learning.

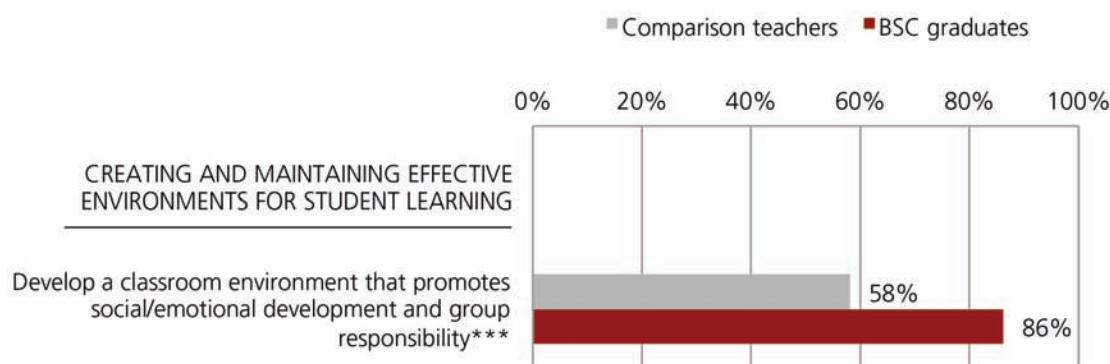
Purposeful teacher–student interactions, ranging from one-on-one conferences to whole-class meetings, help create and maintain classroom environments that are conducive for student learning because as Biber details, such environments support children's individual and collective development. At the Bank Street–affiliated schools we visited, we saw evidence that meetings were utilized to nurture a supportive social and curricular environment.

Teacher–student and student–student interactions are equally important for building the classroom community integral to the developmental-interaction approach (Nager & Shapiro, 2000). Learning to design and manage these types of learning environments is an important part of the current Bank Street teaching program curriculum, as illustrated in this course description:

Designing and Managing Classroom Environments in Inclusive and Special Education Settings: This course is designed to help teachers create classroom environments that will meet the needs of all children, including those with learning and/or behavioral problems. Addressing the concerns of both general and special education teachers, it incorporates presentations, role-playing, discussions, analyses of multimedia content, and informal diagnostic procedures. Teachers examine the complexities of their day-to-day responsibilities and concerns, including classroom design, varied approaches to behavioral intervention, and the interplay among curricula, rules, expectations, routines, procedures, and children's behavior. (Bank Street College of Education, 2014b)

In our survey, Bank Street graduates reported a strong sense of preparedness to develop classroom environments that promote social–emotional development and group responsibility. Relative to their peers who graduated from other programs, Bank Street alumni feel much more comfortable fostering such environments conducive for student learning, as outlined in Figure 14 (next page).

Figure 14. Percentages of Bank Street Graduates and Comparison Teachers Who Responded “Well” or “Very Well” to Survey Question: *How well did your teacher preparation program prepare you to do each of the following as a teacher?*



Note. Significance of comparison of item means of Bank Street College graduates versus comparison teachers indicated next to item: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Teachers at the three schools we visited held class meetings and student conferences daily. Holly, a first grade teacher at the Brooklyn New School explains that for her and her co-teacher Richard, also a graduate of Bank Street, “Morning meeting is so important to both of us...It’s something that we really work on every morning. To see [our students] go from the beginning of the year where they’re silly and goofy, and [then later] see them greeting each other with respect.”

The fundamental nature of meeting defines the daily pace of life in the Bank Street–connected schools we visited. As the principal of Midtown West, Ryan, notes:

...the openness and willingness for a teacher to have those conversations with kids. Everyday there’s some kind of a meeting, a class meeting, where the kids...sit in a circle and they talk about issues, and if there’s a problem, they discuss [it]. So a lot of time is allotted to that particular practice. Whereas in other schools, that is discouraged, unless it’s maybe kindergarten or first grade. Here, it’s definitely a part of the core practice.

Process-Oriented Learning: Encouraging Independent and Lifelong Learning

Not only do meetings and conferences help teachers organize instruction that is responsive to individual and collective student needs, they also provide opportunities for teachers to work with students on understanding the learning processes that lead to growth and progress. A keen focus on and transparency around procedures, routines, habits, methods, and processes are all hallmarks of the pedagogy of the Bank

Street graduates we observed. Focused meetings and dialogue that encourage students to attend to and sharpen learning processes occur regularly in the classrooms of Bank Street–prepared teachers:

“Lorien, come share your story with us.” Yazmin motions to a girl in pigtails wearing a white T-shirt with a bird on it. Lorien stands up and quickly makes her way to the storyteller chair at the front of the room. Liliana hands her a green beanbag.

“Remember, Lorien is the speaker today,” Liliana explains to the kindergarten class she co-teaches with Yazmin at Brooklyn New School. Then Liliana, a Bank Street graduate, holds up a red beanbag, “I’m going to hold the red bag to remind us that we’re the careful listeners.” Liliana kneels on the rug with the rest of her students, while Yazmin sits in the chair on the other side of the easel and takes notes on a small whiteboard.

Lorien sits up straight in the storyteller chair and shares her story: “I went to the library to get new books. Then I went to the park, and I went on the slide and swings. Then I played with a friend. Then I went home for lunch.”

Lorien sits back in the chair and stares at her classmates, who have been watching her closely.

“Who can retell her story?” Liliana asks the group, as she trades places with Lorien.

Gigi, who is wearing a pink top and purple leggings, shoots up her hand. As she retells Lorien’s story, Liliana draws pictures (e.g., book, tree, slide) on the easel to signal the different parts of Lorien’s account.

Liliana then turns to her students and asks, “How many parts are in Lorien’s story?” She prompts the students to count the images with her. They collectively determine that the story has six parts. Liliana then closes her eyes and points to her temple. “Take a moment to think about which part you think you’re going to draw or write about in your book.” She opens her eyes and looks at the children. Some have closed their eyes, and others are staring at the pictures on the easel. “When you’re ready, put your thumb up in front of your chest,” Liliana says.

Liliana looks around as the students one by one place their thumbs in front of their chests. She waits until all 26 children have their thumbs up. After a reminder about the different ways they can add details—color, things around you, people, feelings, etc.—Liliana sends the students off to start their writing and drawing. As the students begin to work at their tables, Liliana puts picture cards of step-by-step instructions with both words and visual icons in the students’ writing books. Each card has the following instructions:

- 1) *Think*
- 2) *Write*
- 3) *Draw*
- 4) *Add Details*
- 5) *Add Labels*
- 6) *Add Words*

Pulling up a chair beside Lorien, Liliana asks her to find her checklist. Lorien pulls out the card that Liliana placed in her writing book and places it next to her drawing.

“Tell me about your drawing,” Liliana prompts Lorien.

Lorien points to the checklist as she explains her process for making her picture of a slide and a swing set in a field: “I thought about the park so I could remember it. Then I wrote ‘P’ for park and I drew a slide and a swing and grass. Now I have to add details.”

With an awe-struck expression, Liliana holds up Lorien’s picture as if carefully examining a masterpiece. She points out the details she already notices in Lorien’s grass. “What’s another detail you could add?”

“Coloring?” Lorien looks at Liliana expectantly.

“Coloring is one detail!” Liliana then leaves Lorien, who proceeds to grab colored pencils from the supply bin at the center of her table.

Minutes later, Liliana comes back to Lorien and gasps in amazement at the color Lorien has added to her drawing. “Lorien! I see so many details! What do you notice is different about your drawing?”

Beaming with pride, Lorien points out all of the colors she incorporated and where she added them.

Making the learning process transparent to her children is an important goal for Liliana. She explains, “It’s all about hitting the breaks and slowing down. Is this something where I want to zoom in...when [the students and I] can go back and take a closer look?...Slowing down so I can show them their growth and their work.” Liliana believes this is important for students to see that their “work is serious; we value [their] work.” By holding meetings where the class focuses specifically on process, Liliana

guides her students to be more metacognitive about their own learning. In this writing session, her students are pushed to think about the steps that go into telling a story, creating a drawing about that story, and adding details to those drawings. Liliana then has individual meetings with her students where they can pause to pay attention to the work that they are doing at each step in the process.

Such process-oriented teaching is at the core of personal growth encouraged via the developmental-interaction approach. The early faculty members of Bank Street had an active orientation to learning, a view still vibrant among the college's current faculty:

Learning was not seen as a matter of acquiring information, an orientation identified with the "traditional view" and what may be termed the "empty receptacle" theory of mind, but as a process of coming to understand the world one lives in and acquiring the range of capabilities that enables one to be an effective, productive member of society. These capabilities encompass the practical level of everyday problem solving; the ability to conceptualize; to reason in ways that are at once grounded, rigorous, and creative. (Franklin, 2000, p. 50-1)

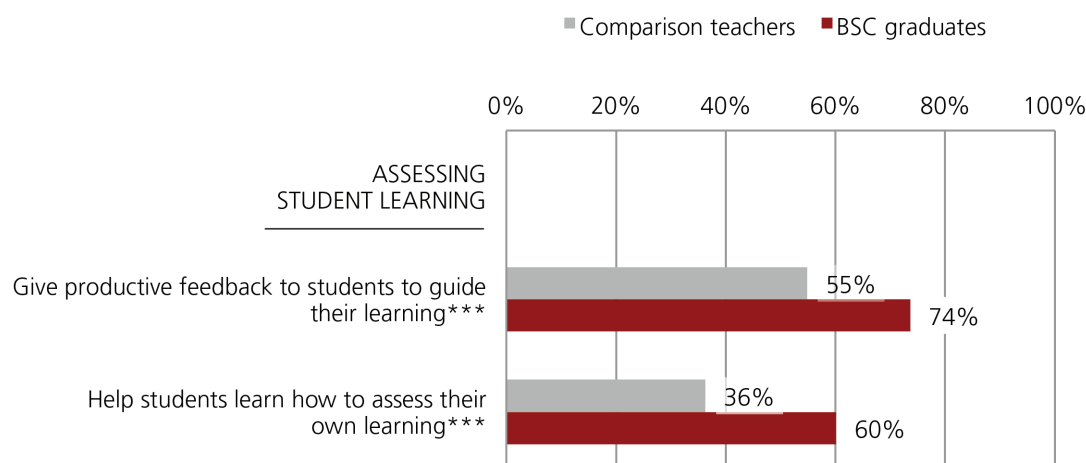
These views about learning emphasize the need to make the act of thinking, or reasoning, transparent to students so that they can come to better understand the capabilities and processes needed to reach learning and other personal and collective goals. These include aims for contributing to the larger society. This valuing of process was something that teachers at all the schools we visited echoed. "We're not product-oriented," one Community Roots teacher said. She explained:

We're teaching the writer, not the writing....we're engaging students actively and reflectively in their own learning process, making them more and more aware as they move through that. And in order to teach that well, I think we have to make the process more apparent.

Meetings and conferences are ideal venues for making students' learning processes transparent. By sitting down one-on-one with a child, or in a small group, and "zooming in" on the development of processes and procedures that support and encourage learning, teachers guide students to engage in the very observation and reflection practices they themselves learned as students at Bank Street. Meetings and conferences, as such, are an important element of the Bank Street approach to students. As Biber (1973) said in a lecture titled, "What is Bank Street?" the faculty at Bank Street College "aim for actively involved children acquiring competence and a sense of their own competence....The teacher uses every opportunity to foster intellectual mastery, to promote cognitive power by creating a pervasive climate of why and wherefore and wherefrom kind of thinking." In conducting process-oriented meetings, educators aim to support children in developing a better understanding of themselves and how they interact with the world.

Given these goals among the Bank Street faculty to support student teachers to foster a “why and wherefore and wherefrom kind of thinking” in children, it is perhaps unsurprising that, according to the survey of teaching program graduates and comparison teachers, Bank Street alumni feel more comfortable giving feedback to students that guides their individual learning than teachers from other programs. Bank Street alumni also reported greater confidence in their ability to help students learn to assess their own learning than graduates from other teacher preparation programs. (See Figure 15.)

Figure 15. Percentages of Bank Street Graduates and Comparison Teachers Who Responded “Well” or “Very Well” to Survey Question: How well did your teacher preparation program prepare you to do each of the following as a teacher?



*Note. Significance of comparison of item means of Bank Street College graduates versus comparison teachers indicated next to item: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.*

Meetings that focus on process are one way that Bank Street graduates can achieve these assessment objectives. Indeed, alumni express gratitude for their own opportunities to engage in such process-oriented learning while at the college:

I believe one of the college’s greatest strengths is the process in which the school teaches its students to explore their own thinking in [the] classroom under the guidance of its talented and knowledgeable faculty. Although I’m retired, those skills that were imparted and absorbed as part of the Bank Street method have served me well in everyday life...the metacognition I acquired while a student had a profound impact on my life.

Regarding Students as Young Scholars

“Monday’s geography group! Meet me by the blue table.” Heads of Midtown West School third graders briskly turn to look at the groups listed at the back of the classroom. Five students—Jerome, Brittany, Christy, Violet, and Jared—quickly shuffle toward a table labeled “Blue,” where their teacher Johanna, a Bank Street graduate, stands with a yellow bin full of trade books on Africa and South Africa. “Alright geographers,” she begins, leaning over to meet her students at eye-level. “We’re gonna do something differently with geography group this week. Not only are you generating the questions, but you’re gonna do the research. Think about what you already know about Africa or South Africa, and think about questions.” She then instructs the students to come up with one question to ask the class about African or South African geography. The group is to generate a question as well as research the answer. This question will be shared with the entire class, who will look up the answer later in the day. When she finishes explaining the task, Johanna walks away to check in with other students completing their morning routines.

“I have an idea!” Christy exclaims. “What if there’s similar weather to America?” Violet leans over a map of South Africa spread out on the table and says that she thinks Arizona and California might have similar weather to South Africa.

Overhearing this, Johanna kneels down by the group of students and asks, “What would you have to figure out first?”

“What the weather in South Africa is,” Christy replies, nodding to Johanna with confidence.

Johanna grabs a globe that is sitting on a nearby shelf and places it on the table.

Pointing at South Africa, Jared suggests, “It’ll be hot and humid since it’s close to the equator.”

“It’s a big country. Would it all be the same weather?” Johanna asks.

Jerome raises his hand and says, “It’ll be colder the farther south you go because you’re farther from the equator.” The other students nod in agreement.

Then Johanna gives the group a challenge to compare the weather of the capital of the United States with that of the capital of South Africa. Johanna’s prompt, “What’s the capital of South Africa? Can you take a moment to find out?” sends the students diving into the bin of books and flipping through pages of the texts.

“There are three capital cities!” Jerome exclaims.

“There are three capitals?!” Violet repeats as she runs over to Jerome and leans over

his shoulder to look at his book. Christy and Brittany find a similar page describing South Africa's capitals in a separate book and begin reading. The students discover that South Africa has an administrative capital (Pretoria), a legislative capital (Cape Town), and a judicial capital (Bloemfontein).

Johanna asks the students what they think each word—administrative, legislative, and judicial—means. Brittany hypothesizes that administrative means, “like the boss.” Jerome explains, “I just think of voting” when he hears the term legislative. Jared replies that judicial is “like judge.”

Jerome points to a line in his book and says, “I think it’s the administrative one cuz the book says it’s the national capital.” “That’s where the boss is,” Brittany and Christy interject. Violet looks at the globe and notices that Pretoria is the only capital that has a star on the globe. The students decide that they want to ask the class a question about Pretoria, the administrative capital of South Africa.

Violet opens up a composition notebook and says, “let’s write bullets,” offering to write a list of possible questions the group could pose to the class. She begins by writing “Weather” and “Capitals,” each on its own line.

Brittany offers, “Maybe, ‘What’s the most important capital?’”

Jerome shakes his head as he explains to Brittany that including “most important” in the question might be asking students to share their opinions and not to look up a fact.

“Oh wait, can I make it harder?” Brittany looks up at the group, eyes wide with excitement. “Can I ask: What capital in South Africa is most similar to the Washington, D.C., capital?”

Several students exclaim, “Yeah!” Brittany then writes the question on a strip of paper for the group to present to their peers, who will later research the answer themselves.

In schools like Midtown West that have deep connections to the Bank Street approach, helping students develop research skills with an orientation toward becoming lifelong learners is considered as an essential goal. Students are viewed as developing scholars who generate questions and explore possible answers by reading texts, conducting interviews, exploring other resources, and taking field trips. Johanna’s geography groups are one way that students take on the role of scholarly researcher in the third grade South Africa Study. She explains, “They’re really researchers, and I think that’s key...we really work hard in the second–third grade loop trying to make them into researchers, giving them the tools that they need as they move on to fourth and fifth grade.”

One element of the Bank Street College credo is to see human beings develop “[l]ively intellectual curiosities that turn the world into an exciting laboratory and keep one ever a learner” (Bank Street College of Education, 2014e). The scholarly research skills developed in students at every school we studied nurture an orientation toward personal motivation to learn. By generating their own research questions and investigating problems of interest, students develop deep understanding of topics that matter to them and to the larger community. The centrality of this type of active learning at Midtown West is what drew Principal Ryan Bourke to the school in the first place. He explains:

One of the reasons why I was quite excited to come here and join the staff was empowering kids to be learners. Teaching kids that even at the young age of kindergarten, they can take a piece of paper and a clipboard and they can measure the world, make observations, ask questions. They can frame problems, bring that information back to the classroom, analyze it, and choose a way to present it. I feel that is something that sums up for me what the curriculum represents here at Midtown West. I call it creating this type of space [where] they assume the status of a researcher from kindergarten. They assume the status of a mathematician, or of a reader, or of a writer... We’re not telling them what to learn. We’re teaching them how to learn and how to be prepared when they enter middle school and high school and the world.

The faculty and staff at Community Roots express similar goals to foster a passion for lifelong scholarship in children. Across the classrooms we observed, there was a verbal register used by teachers in their engagement with students:

- “You are a *playwright*,” Oliver says to Louisa.
- During math class, we hear Jane telling the students, “You are a *mathematician* and you need to figure out how to solve this problem for your client.”
- In a history lesson, Megan refers to her students as “*researchers*.”

One teacher described the conscious use of this register in this way:

[It is] as an effort to develop an identity as more than a student. Addressing them as “researcher,” or “mathematician” conveys our belief that we do this work [to extend] beyond just the classroom. It’s about how we approach a problem in the real world. We’re not just doing this in the classroom.

This deliberate use of language and general orientation of the teachers seems to serve multiple purposes. It is evident that the teachers are conveying a deep level of respect and expectation for their students. Their practice promotes a centering of the work on the long-term prospects of the student as a lifelong learner, one who will embrace the identities of the disciplines under study. In addition, these interactions model and promote the notion that the purpose of the work of school is to serve the needs and interests of the students beyond their instrumental tasks in the classroom and extend to the needs and interests and long-term prospects of the student as a learner, creator, and engaged community member.

Richard, an alumnus of Bank Street College and a current teacher at Brooklyn New School, said that teaching students to be inquisitive, scholarly thinkers who pursue their own intellectual curiosities is what makes schools that adopt the Bank Street approach special:

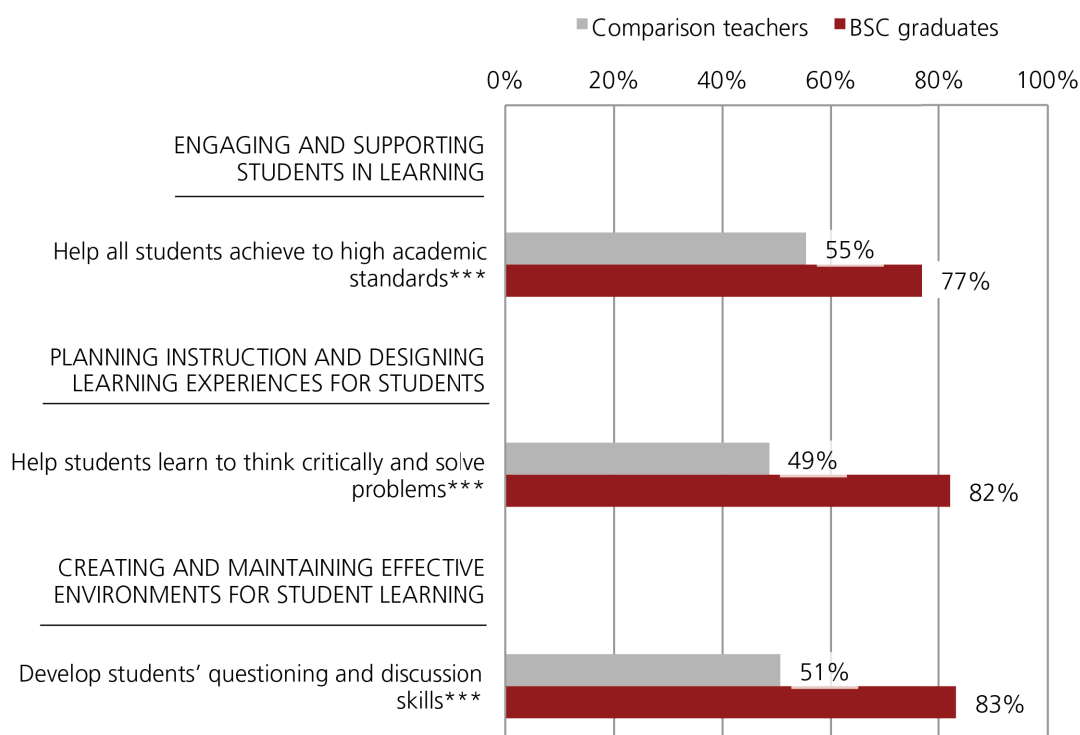
It is the value of caring and kindness. You know, the value of inquiry. Like being inquisitive. And science in first grade, so much isn't about the answers, it's about engaging [children] in the habit of mind of just wondering. Just wondering and thinking. And it doesn't matter to me if they find those answers, but as a first grade teacher, if I can really foster those values of thinking and wondering and experimenting and trying things...I think that's what is most important.

Other Bank Street graduates express similar values, and attribute these ideas about building up students as lifelong scholars to their preparation at the college. Responses on the Teaching Program Survey reflect this trend: relative to their peers from other programs, Bank Street graduates report feeling more comfortable helping students achieve high academic standards, learn to think critically and solve problems, and develop questioning and discussion skills (see Figure 16, next page).

Graduates feel confident in their ability to develop students' inquiry and critical thinking skills because such instructional practice was repeatedly modeled at Bank Street. In the words of Bank Street alumni:

- Bank Street College changed the way I live and how I see the world. The program not only taught me how to teach children academics but also how to become meaningful members of society. My time at Bank Street made me a deeply reflective person who now understands how to meet children where they are. The school taught me how to attend to the academic and emotional needs of all students, how to foster a caring and safe community, and how to build a rigorous and creative curriculum.

Figure 16. Percentages of Bank Street Graduates and Comparison Teachers Who Responded “Well” or “Very Well” to Survey Question: *How well did your teacher preparation program prepare you to do each of the following as a teacher?*



Note. Significance of comparison of item means of Bank Street College graduates versus comparison teachers indicated next to item: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

- As a Bank Street grad, I look for certain hallmarks and shared experiences with the teachers we hire, and I am often struck by the diversity of the graduates but their amazingly similar experiences at the college. Bank Street is a hallmark for early childhood and elementary education in my opinion; educators learn how to get the best from children all while nurturing their curiosity and growth.

Taking students seriously, encouraging them to see themselves as scholars and researchers, teaching them skills that enable them to direct their own learning, and ultimately inspiring children to become lifelong learners are long-term aims of the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach. We saw skillful instruction that fosters these aims at all of the Bank Street–connected schools we visited. This example from Community Roots Charter School is emblematic of the way many Bank Street graduates take seriously the scholarly interests and pursuits of their students:

Three girls from Oliver's fourth grade class catch us in the hallways: "Did you know it's Deborah Sampson day?!" they inquire enthusiastically.

"Who's Deborah Sampson?" we pose back.

"Deborah Sampson was a young woman who wanted to volunteer for the army during the Revolutionary War. Women weren't allowed to fight in the Revolutionary War because men didn't think they were capable of it. But Deborah Sampson broke the law to serve her country. She dressed up like a man and joined the army. We think she was very brave, so we are having Deborah Sampson day to celebrate her."

We inquire further about what happened with Deborah Sampson, whether she was ever found out, and how they know so much about her. The girls note that they have read several articles about Deborah Sampson and researched her story online. They point out that her story isn't fully known, but they believe the accounts of Sampson that suggest she was injured in battle more than once, but probably didn't get medical care because she was afraid of being caught as a woman. According to the students, at one point, a doctor treating her wounds discovered her true identity. But the doctor kept her secret, and Sampson went back to the army. Several years after the war, Sampson was honored by the state of Massachusetts, where they still celebrate Deborah Sampson day in her honor.

The girls carried with them a pamphlet outlining the history of Deborah Sampson, her role during the war, and some other interesting facts about her life. They were distributing the pamphlets to students, teachers, and parents before and after school and during their lunch and recess breaks.

"Why are you telling us about Deborah Sampson?" we inquired. "Is this a project for an assignment for your class?"

One of the girls responded, "No. We learned about Deborah Sampson and wanted people to know about her story. It wasn't just men who helped in the Revolutionary War. There were women, too, and we think it's important for women to be honored not just men. We wanted to share her story."

Oliver's colleague, Joel, observes that teachers who adhere to the Bank Street approach aim to help children "build skills so that they can investigate the things that they're interested in." This orientation to developing students as scholars is evident in how Oliver approached his fourth graders' curiosity in Deborah Sampson. Once the girls conveyed their interest, they were encouraged to take on the role of independent scholar, utilizing skills in the discipline of history, connecting them in meaningful ways to their own interests, and then acting on that knowledge in ways that connect to their own present day interests and circumstances. This is directly linked to the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach, which emphasizes

the importance of having students drive their own learning based on their individual passions and developmental patterns. As Paige, a 4–5 grade loop teacher at Midtown West puts it: “[We’re] really holding kids accountable for leading a lot of what happens in the classrooms...that is something pretty eminent from Bank Street.”

Approach to students: Conclusion

Lucy Sprague Mitchell believed that closely observing children was a fundamental skill and practice for teaching. In the early days of the Bureau of Educational Experiments, which later would become Bank Street College of Education, teachers were taught to always carry a notepad and pencil to record student comments, actions, responses, and interactions (Nager & Shapiro, 2007). Combining the intensive study of each student with the formal study of child development in order to understand, value, and meet the needs of the whole child came to be known as the “developmental-interaction” approach. This approach “recognizes that children learn best when they are actively engaged both intellectually and emotionally with materials, ideas, and people” (Bank Street College of Education, 2014a).

The developmental-interaction approach is central to the preparation graduate students receive at Bank Street. According to longtime Bank Street faculty members Shapiro and Biber, educators who take on this developmental-interaction approach to teaching recognize that students’ development unfolds at varying paces and through interaction with the world. They regard the school classroom as a space that should

strengthen the child’s competence to deal effectively with the environment; encourage the development of autonomy and the construction of a sense of self; promote the integration of functions—that is, thought and feeling, feeling and action—and stimulate individuality and vigorous, creative response. (Shapiro & Biber, 1972, p. 61)

Two core courses—Child Development, and The Study of Children in Diverse and Inclusive Settings Through Observation and Recording—provide students an overarching set of foundational ideas and practices for effective teaching in accordance with the Bank Street approach. A vast majority of graduates (99% of respondents to the Teaching Program Survey) characterize Bank Street as focusing on a developmental, child-centered approach to education.

Our study concluded that integrating an awareness of child development with instruction is fundamental to the teaching practices that we observed in the classrooms of Bank Street graduates and that were reported in the Teaching Program Survey and Comparison Teacher Survey. Teachers who graduated from Bank Street design learning experiences that involve play, emphasize process, and ultimately

strive to develop young children as intellectual, curious scholars who eagerly interact with the world around them. In particular, five themes emerged:

- The importance of play and child development in support of learning,
- The prominent role of close observation of students,
- The centrality of meetings and conferences in support of student learning,
- An explicit focus on the learning process to foster independence and ongoing learning, and
- A regard for students as young scholars and lifelong learners.

Play and child development. An important part of the developmental-interaction approach, play gives children an opportunity to explore their emotions, ideas, and creativity in symbolic form. Because play helps young children develop intellectually as well as socially and emotionally, it has always been a central component to the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach.

Close observation of students. A primary component of the Bank Street graduate program involves teaching graduate students to appreciate the value of closely observing children. The processes, skills, and tools of learning to look directly and systematically at each student provides teachers with central understandings necessary for developing curriculum and assessments, interacting with the student's family, and making other key decisions.

Mitchell believed that observing students made it possible for teachers to implement child-centered instruction that was guided by moves students made and interests they expressed. The alumni responses on the Teaching Program Survey reflected their confidence in approaching instruction in this way. Nearly 86% of Bank Street graduates responded “well” or “very well” when asked how prepared they were to develop curriculum that builds on student experiences, interests, and abilities in contrast to only 54% of the comparison teachers.

Meetings and conferences. In our three case study schools, graduates organized their classrooms in ways that utilized a broad array of meetings and conferences among students and between students and teachers as a core instructional practice. In both the Teaching Program Survey and in-person interviews Bank Street graduates conveyed their belief that learning occurs through ongoing relational interaction.

The range of meeting structures, which included one-on-one, small group, and

whole-class meetings, provides opportunities to work with and build upon each child's unique strengths, interests, and needs. The "interaction" generally entails connecting with a student, listening deeply, and asking an ongoing series of open-ended questions. In meetings that we observed at the three schools, we heard teachers slow down the pace and create space for student thought, reflection, and depth. In this way, teachers and students work collectively and in connectivity to make progress appropriate to each student's individual development.

Focus on the learning process. Teachers transparently and purposefully focused on the processes of learning and engagement. They practiced an approach to students that involved engaging them in ongoing meetings, conversations, learning experiences, and interactions, with an explicit focus on developing habits, routines, and processes important to a student's ongoing learning, development, and independence.

Young scholars and lifelong learners. In the schools we visited, teachers viewed students as young scholars and encouraged students to think of themselves in the same light. They encouraged students to approach their work with a lively and engaged stance, emphasizing curiosity and questions as well as the quest for lifelong learning.

One element of the Bank Street College credo is to see human beings develop "lively intellectual curiosities that turn the world into an exciting laboratory and keep one ever a learner" (Bank Street College of Education, 2014e). By allowing students to generate their own research questions and investigate problems of personal interest, the teachers were seeking to develop in their students a deep understanding of topics that matter to them and to the larger community, as well as nurture the children's intrinsic motivation to learn.

Teachers encouraged students to see themselves in scholarly roles, such as mathematicians, artists, and historians, as a way to transcend classroom boundaries and stretch toward learning as a meaningful, purposeful, and important element of life. As one teacher told us, "[It is] as an effort to develop an identity as more than a student. Addressing them as 'researcher,' or 'mathematician' conveys our belief that we do this work [to extend] beyond just the classroom. It's about how we approach a problem in the real world. We're not just doing this in the classroom."

Summary. By encouraging play, engaging in careful observation and reflection, utilizing regular meetings and conferences, emphasizing process, and taking children seriously as young scholars, Bank Street graduates and the schools where they work nurture a passion for independent, lifelong learning in students. The Bank Street approach to students regards the whole child as an agent who, with the support of skillful and developmentally oriented teaching practices, can develop independence and agency in support of her own learning.



Approach to Curriculum

What do we in progressive schools mean by a study? We mean, of course, getting into contact with factual data. But we mean, do we not, something considerably more than this acquisition of informational content? The word trails a method of work—a first-hand laboratory approach, an experimental attitude, a handling of sources, a discovery of significant relations within the data, a situation that permits genuine thinking on the part of the children of the type which characterizes investigators—not the type which characterizes antiquarians. Our studies are not always carried on by this method, because compromises are distressingly well known inside progressive schools, just as they are outside. But the laboratory approach is our aim. (Mitchell, 1931)

The Bank Street ethos, from its inception to present practice, suggests that teaching is an intellectual venture guided by the principle that meaningful learning involves inquiry, curiosity, and experiential encounters with the broader world. Rather than seeing teaching as the “transmission of factual and procedural knowledge from one person to another,” the discipline of teaching was regarded by early faculty members

as aiming for “a transformation of one kind or another in the person being taught,” writes Jackson (as cited in Grinberg, 2005, p. 58). This learner-centered perspective of teaching is one where the teacher’s role is to create opportunities for learners to interact with materials and with each other in ways that allow for personal transformations. Early Bank Street faculty members believed that in order to guide children to explore and construct knowledge, “teachers would then be able to devise ways for children to adventure their way to real knowledge...Teachers would have to become a species of mountaineer, findings paths between innocent curiosity and the great store of human knowledge, and leading children in the great adventures from one to the other” (Cohen, as cited in Grinberg, 2005, p. 56).

In the Bank Street approach to curriculum, children are given problems and questions to explore through inquiry and experience in both the classroom and the world beyond the school. Biber (1973) outlines the objectives for this type of approach to curriculum in her lecture *What is Bank Street?*:

We do not see the need for contrived techniques to motivate children; instead we find a healthy fund of curiosity and a drive to produce an effect on the environment. Satisfied curiosity and the intrinsic rewards of mastery are powerful generators of renewed motivation. Active investigation, independent pursuit, learning through discovery are dominant in the learning climate, but we respect and honor the kind of content for which pre-structured information or formal instruction may be more efficient and, in fact, satisfying, in its own way. The curriculum of activities is kept flexible but there is a planned framework of what basic knowledge is necessary for effective functioning at different stages of development and what skills are needed to acquire it.

This inquiry-based, constructivist, real-world connected, and developmentally oriented approach to curriculum is evident across the range of data sources we explored in this study, from surveys of Bank Street program graduates and comparison teachers, perspectives of employers, and observations in the Bank Street-affiliated schools we visited. Bank Street graduates and their colleagues create opportunities for students to engage in the investigative, discovery-oriented, collaborative learning experiences that Biber speaks of, and they do so across content areas. One of the teachers we spoke to described this Bank Street approach to curriculum as: “a lot of inquiry-based learning: learning through doing, through experimenting and creating...kids are challenged to talk and to think and to ask questions and to have conversations...and it’s giving kids more time to really learn the way kids really do learn.”

Bank Street preparation for teaching across the curriculum. From its inception, Bank Street College has sought to enact a teacher preparation program that would treat teaching as a discipline and a profession. Faculty model and enact

the practices of teaching and learning they hope to instill in their students. The students themselves have to engage in critical thinking, inquiry, and intellectual discourse, just as they would encourage their own students to do. By becoming academically curious, the teachers create opportunities that instill a similar curiosity in their own students. As early Bank Street faculty members described it, the students had to have a strong understanding of “the content that was to be learned and the ways to construct a meaningful classroom environment for children to understand this content” (Grinberg, 2005, p. 57). They thought it was essential that Bank Street students develop a passion for discovery and meaning-making because:

the teacher whose own intellectual processes were stimulated by new insights and discoveries would then make the analog and create for her children the same sense of excitement and discovery that she found for herself. That is if the teacher acquired a sense of the inter-relationship of the world in which they lived as grown-ups, then they could interpret to children the world in which they lived, and make it a vital, breathing, exciting setting in which history takes place. (Black & Bios, as cited in Grinberg, 2005, p. 56).

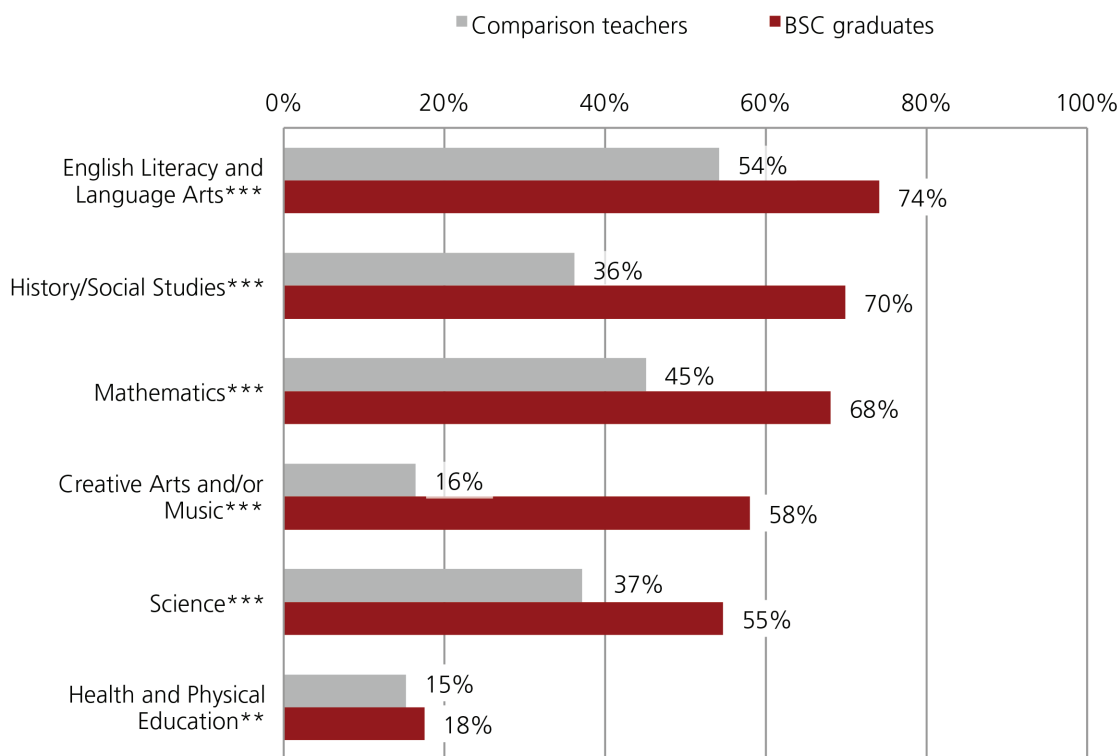
Evidence from our surveys and case studies suggest that graduates of the Bank Street teacher preparation programs do in fact develop this enthusiasm for inquiry and exploratory learning. As one Bank Street graduate explained:

What sets our school apart and makes it a Bank Street school is the experience-based learning. I mean if you just look around and see what the first grade combination was like or even if you just walk into our rooms and you see the way kids are learning, they’re learning in ways that connect them to the real world. And that’s I think the most Bank Street thing....that’s what defines Bank Street philosophy in teaching and learning....As a student there, that’s what I experienced...It wasn’t just read these articles and talk about ’em. It was, “Let’s try these things out. See how it works with real kids. And how can we help kids make connections to their world?”

As a result of this experiential, discovery-based approach to teaching and learning, Bank Street graduates report feeling better prepared than other teachers for subject-matter teaching in all areas surveyed. When contrasted with the comparison teachers, Bank Street graduate survey respondents are significantly more likely to indicate that their teacher preparation program prepared them to teach “well” or “very well” in every subject area surveyed. Graduates report being especially well prepared in English literacy and language arts, history/social studies, and mathematics. In creative arts and music, more than half of Bank Street graduates felt “well” or “very well” prepared, in contrast to very few graduates of other programs. Even in the area of health and

physical education, where both Bank Street graduates and comparison teachers report being less well prepared, Bank Street graduates still offer a higher opinion of their preparation at statistically significant rates. (See Figure 17.)

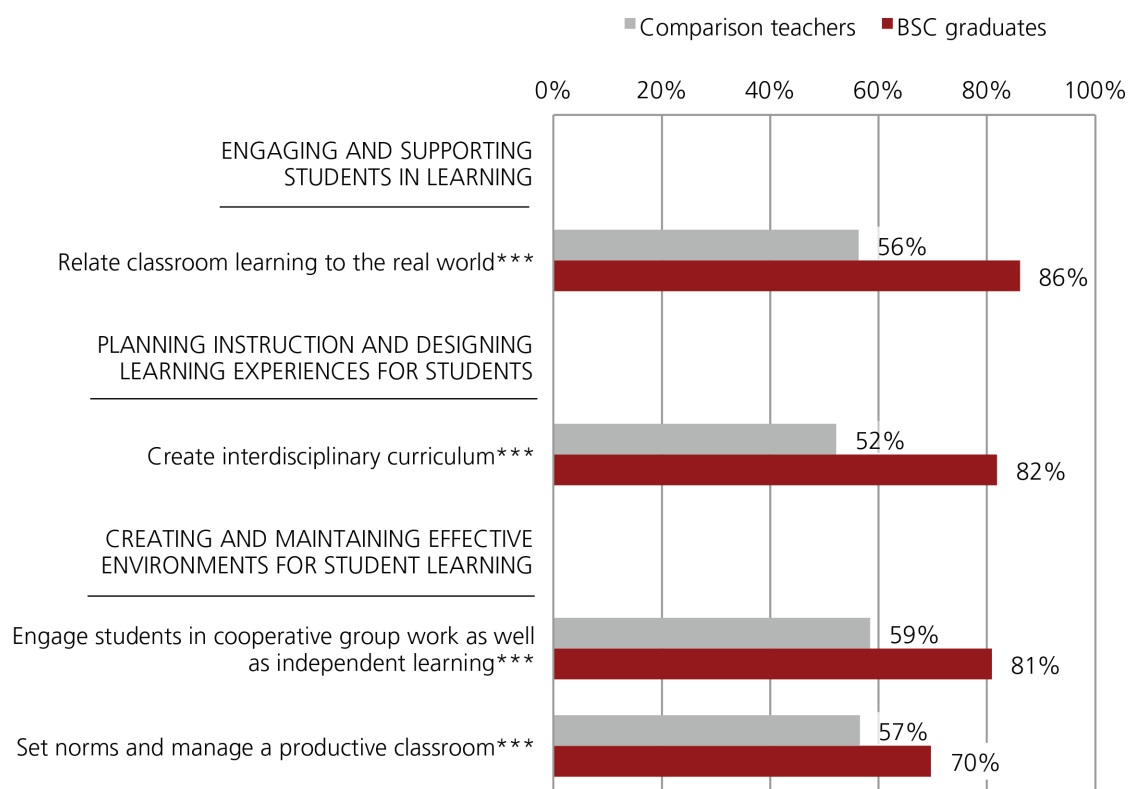
Figure 17. Percentages of Bank Street Graduates and Comparison Teachers Who Responded “Well” or “Very Well” to Survey Question: *How well do you feel your teacher preparation program prepared you to teach each of the following subjects?*



Note. Significance of comparison of item means of Bank Street College graduates versus comparison teachers indicated next to item: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Not only do Bank Street graduates feel effectively prepared to teach content across curricular domains, they also feel more comfortable than their peers from other programs with making learning relevant to students, creating interdisciplinary curriculum, and creating opportunities for productive cooperative group work as well as independent learning. In other words, Bank Street graduates feel effectively prepared to develop curricula and learning environments where children can interact with one another and with learning materials in order to meaningfully construct knowledge. (See Figure 18, next page.)

Figure 18. Percentages of Bank Street Graduates and Comparison Teachers Who Responded “Well” or “Very Well” to Survey Question: *How well did your teacher preparation program prepare you to do each of the following as a teacher?*



Note. Significance of comparison of item means of Bank Street College graduates versus comparison teachers indicated next to item: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

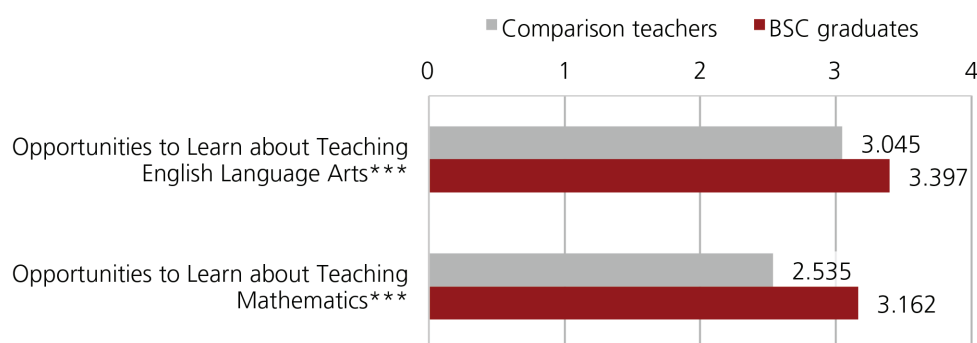
Another set of survey items asked respondents how much opportunity they had to engage in specific teaching activities directly related to classroom practice during their teacher preparation program. These items were used to create an “opportunities to learn about teaching English literacy and language arts” composite variable and an “opportunities to learn about teaching mathematics” composite variable. (See Appendix A for details.) Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2009) have demonstrated that teachers who have had more opportunity in their teacher preparation programs to learn about teaching English language arts and mathematics (as measured by these composite variables) are more likely to have greater student gains on reading and math scores their first year of teaching.

Almost without exception, Bank Street graduates are significantly more likely than the comparison teachers to have indicated that they had the opportunity to engage in these activities during their teacher preparation program. (The one exception to

this trend is there is not a statically significant difference in their reported opportunities to review local district reading curricula; both Bank Street graduates and the comparison teachers reported few opportunities for doing so.)

Figure 19 demonstrates the comparison between Bank Street graduates and the comparison teachers for the two composite variables. Bank Street graduates are statistically significantly more likely than the comparison teachers to have indicated that they had a substantial opportunity (defined as “exploring in some depth” or “having extensive opportunity”) to learn how to teach English language arts and mathematics.

Figure 19. Means of Composite Variable Based on Responses of Bank Street Graduates and Comparison Teachers to Survey Question: *In your teacher preparation program, how much opportunity did you have to do each of the following?*



Note. Significance of comparison of item means of Bank Street College graduates versus comparison teachers indicated next to item mean of comparison teachers: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

The content-specific pedagogical courses that Bank Street offers prospective teachers, particularly their approach to illustrating hands-on methods for making content engaging and relevant, appear to influence the extent of preparedness graduates feel. In the words of one Bank Street graduate:

My Bank Street training has had a profound effect on the way that I have approached these tasks, as well as my ongoing studies. It has also enabled me to gain a broader perspective on different subject areas. What I learned in Bank Street showed me that such subjects as math, physics, and art were far more interesting than I had previously imagined, and changed the way that I saw myself as a learner. I had previously seen these subjects as difficult and boring, and felt that I was bad at them, but the hands-on training at Bank Street showed me that they could be interesting and relevant and I had something to contribute.

The Bank Street approach to curriculum was evident in our extensive surveys of graduates and employers, and in the field studies of Bank Street graduates and their colleagues at the three schools we visited. The implementation of this approach was manifest in the following themes: the centrality of integrated social studies at the core of the curriculum, engaging with outside-of-school environments through carefully planned field trips, the infusion of arts throughout the curriculum, and learning content through collaborative inquiry. What follows is a detailed description of how each theme was displayed across our case study schools and survey studies.

Integrated Social Studies: Core of the Classroom Curriculum

The Bank Street preparation and approach for teaching social studies is particularly touted among graduates. While many schools and teacher preparation programs regard social studies as secondary to literacy and mathematics, Bank Street and its graduates view integrated social studies units as the core of their approach to curriculum. The significance of Bank Street's emphasis on social studies at the center of curricular endeavors emerged as a central theme of our studies. As one graduate explained:

When kids come to school they bring so much with them, and so much of that is about their working so hard all the time to understand the world around them. And I think Bank Street taught me that the role of school is supporting them in that process of making sense of the world around them through every discipline, but social studies [is] a place where we can ask questions about why things are the way that they are in a way that responds to students' development, cognitively and in terms of their identity, beginning with, "Who am I? What makes me, me?" and then moving into, "Why?!" in fifth grade and fourth grade—and a little bit in third grade too—"Why do I see inequality in the world around me? What's happening? Or, what happened in the past that made things the way that they are today?" And those are such hard, painful questions for many of our kids, and they have such different relationships to them. And I see our classrooms as being a place to support them and nurture them in examining those really difficult questions.

Another Bank Street graduate described social studies as "the glue that holds everything else together," while yet another described it as "unifying" in that "it's about helping children understand themselves and their placement in the world and how that just grows." The presence and emphasis of social studies not only organizes how teachers work with children, but it also influences how teachers organize and pace their daily time with children, frames how they write and design curriculum, and shapes the nature of their professional development and collegial conversations. As one teacher said:

Most of us start our day with a social studies meeting...a morning meeting, what have you. There are overarching questions each day that we discuss...We're all very hands-on. The kids get dirty, whether it be on a trip or things that you're doing in the classroom. Ideas come from the children. Nothing is etched in stone. When we sit down to plan [as colleagues], we have these ideas.

Students in the Bank Street teacher preparation program learn how to develop integrated studies curricula where social studies is the core to which all other content areas are connected. Below are descriptions from two of the college's several courses on social studies:

Social Studies as the Center of Upper Elementary Curriculum: Social Studies questions and content can be used to create a sense of focus and purpose in the classroom, and help to create engaging and connected learning experiences in literacy, math, and science. Participants in this workshop will gain specific strategies, and develop ready-to-apply lessons, materials, and planning templates. In addition, students will connect this work with the Common Core Standards.

Creating Curriculum Activities for an Integrated Classroom: This workshop will focus broadly on how to design and set up activities to support curriculum in an integrated classroom based upon a Bank Street model, with social studies as the core curriculum. We will also discuss literacy, math, science, and art activities that incorporate work with materials and play. The workshop will include ways of making these activities more inclusive to address the needs of a diverse student population. The unique and specific contexts of your settings will be taken into account and discussed. (Bank Street College of Education, 2014c)

Through courses such as these, Bank Street students are able to participate in the experiential, inquiry-based learning that they will later construct with their students through the integrated studies curricula they develop. Integrated social studies is central to the approach to curriculum that Bank Street graduates adopt and implement in their classrooms. Graduates speak highly of the training they received in integrated studies at Bank Street, as demonstrated in a sample of qualitative responses from the survey:

- Bank Street excels in teaching social studies, science, and project-based studies.
- Social studies and curriculum development were very strong.

- My Mathematics for Teachers class and my Social Studies Curriculum Development class were the strongest ones that I took at Bank Street—even though I was studying to be a science teacher at the time!
- I do feel very comfortable teaching literacy and social studies.
- In addition, looking at social studies as the core of the curriculum and branching out into inter-disciplinary teaching was a big and important part of what I did at Bank Street that [is] still applicable in my teaching today.
- One of Bank Street’s greatest strengths is the emphasis it places on using real experiences to educate children. I will never forget taking the trip to see the air-conditioning room in the building. It was a lesson most deeply learned, and it has been a goal of mine to continue to teach by using real experiences as much as I can.

The practice of introducing students to the precepts of social studies derives directly from the earliest days of Bank Street. Mitchell introduced a course titled “environment” that was focused on introducing student teachers to the idea of “human geography.” According to Grinberg (2005), the course was designed to introduce the basic principles of the social studies framework. It introduced the idea that one’s community can be a “text” for systematic inquiry. Student teachers began by studying the school community and the neighborhood where they would be student teachers. They pursued this knowledge through observing, conducting interviews, and analyzing written documents and other resources. After they had individually collected data through fieldwork, they formed study groups and “analyzed the historical, geographical, cultural, ethnic and economic” systems of the community (p. 42). This experience dovetailed with their curriculum course, where they learned to write and develop social studies units based on the principles they learned in conducting their own study.

Mitchell articulated an ideal that there should be no division between practical and conceptual work. Practical work, to Mitchell and her colleagues, was a “highly intellectual activity and the conceptual could not be elaborated without grounding theory from experiential situations” (Grinberg, 2005, pg. 23). Mitchell believed:

that the curriculum should continue the laboratory methods, which means it should furnish the children with as many first-hand experiences with the mores of other groups as possible, that it should supplement with vicarious experiences gained through source materials; that it should supply source materials relating to their own mores from the point of view of historic origin, present functioning, and comparative

method; that the children should have more than a passive, absorbent role; that they should do something to their data. (Mitchell, 1934)

This commitment to active and direct engagement between children, ideas, data, community, and the pursuit of understanding through systematic inquiry sticks with Bank Street graduates. They call it the “glue.”

The Bank Street Approach to Curriculum in Action: Integrated Social Studies

“I have the perfect tour guide for you to visit Rosewood,” first grade teacher Yuki says to me as we stand in a hallway teeming with Community Roots students, parents, and siblings. We dodge through the crowd, and she stops in front of a slight and serious boy wearing a dark blue Yankees T-shirt. “Malik, will you take Sam to visit Rosewood?” Malik nods his head, briefly makes eye contact, and then nimbly snakes his way through the crowd.

A 10-foot multicolored banner spans the classroom, “Welcome to Rosewood.” Eight conference tables have been assembled in the middle of the room on top of which sprawls the neighborhood of Rosewood. It is a scaled diorama of a neighborhood designed and constructed by the first grade students using a variety of materials including recycled food product boxes, cardboard, pipe cleaners, corks, Popsicle sticks and other ordinary objects. There are skyscrapers, restaurants, pet stores, bodegas, fire stations, dog-walking parks, ball fields, art boutiques, and more. Cars and trucks constructed out of clay are positioned on the streets of Rosewood, and the models of large shade trees surround the neighborhood. Small details like birds in the trees and carefully crafted street signs round out the teeming neighborhood that includes nearly 80 structures.

The first graders have been immersed in a two-month intensive research study of their Fort Greene neighborhood called the “The City Block Study.” The driving idea behind the investigation is to provide students with an opportunity to see and understand how Community Roots is a school nested within the ecology of a neighborhood. The curriculum moves students through the investigation of how relationships, architecture, and shared space all contribute to the form and function of an urban neighborhood. The unit starts with a series of walking excursions into the neighborhood guided by the following questions:

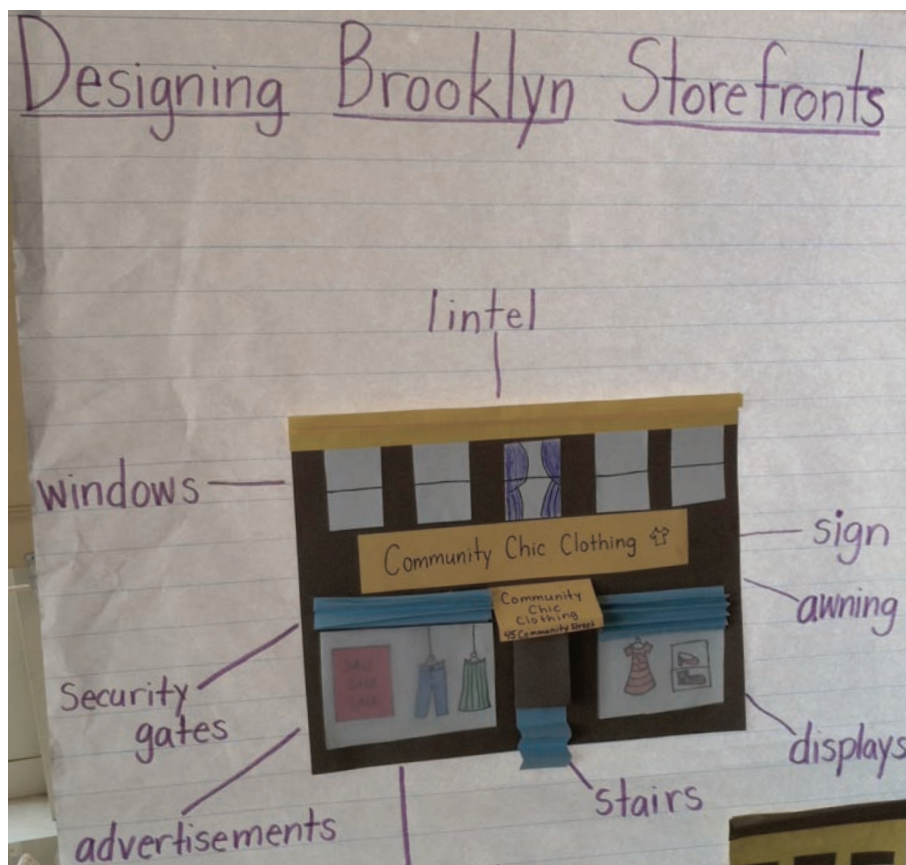
- *What did you notice about Fort Greene?*
- *What kinds of places/features are in Fort Greene?*
- *What kinds of goods and services?*
- *What are needs and wants?*

Over the course of two months, the first graders set off on multiple explorations of Fort Greene. They take numerous walking trips around the community carrying clipboards and trip-observation sheets that guide their research.

As one student reported in her research notebook :

At the very beginning of the neighborhood study we were seeing what neighborhoods look like and we also went on a walk. We saw a lot of commercial blocks more than residential blocks. One trip was around our block and the second trip was past BAM [Brooklyn Academy of Music] past Atlantic Center to Barclays Center. We wrote down what we wondered and what we saw. We learned that buildings come in all different sizes and shapes.

The neighborhood study and its exploration of community as a meaningful context to engage student learning provides an exemplar of Community Roots' intentional focus on project-based, integrated social studies units as a core element of its instructional program. As one teacher said in response to the question, "How would you explain the role of social studies in the Community Roots mission?" He said, "I teach for social studies."



In describing the ways that Community Roots stands out as a Bank Street–affiliated school, Oliver focuses on the centrality of the Integrated Social Studies units (IS), such as the Rosewood Study, at the heart of each grade level at the school:

I think IS [integrated studies] is huge. Really huge...I think IS is really big and important. It feels like it's the glue that holds everything else together, whereas at other schools I've worked at, social studies has been an afterthought and very little attention has been put into making even scheduling time to teach it—let alone the professional development that goes into making it strong. So IS stands out to me as the biggest thing.

In the original documents submitted for Community Roots' charter approval, the ideas of an integrated social studies curriculum are highlighted:

Children learn best in meaningful contexts...Using backward design techniques and a wealth of classroom experience the Community Roots planning team developed three integrated units for each grade level opening...These integrated units are geared to increase student awareness, appreciation and understanding of various world cultures, beginning with their own. (Keil & Stone, 2005, p. 14)

Infused throughout the ongoing work of developing Rosewood is a series of activities that engage children in experiencing the multiple variations of relationship and interaction that exist within a community. As Mitchell wrote in her book *The People of the U.S.A.: Their Place in the School Curriculum*, “the more [the child] knows [about people and places] through personal contact, the better for [the child's] social growth” (Mitchell and Boetz, 1942, p. 9).

Students research and explore how people live, work, and interact in Fort Greene. In exploring how everyday life unfolds in the neighborhood, they learn an essential idea emphasized by Mitchell. As she wrote in *Here and Now Story Book*:

Young children live in the “here and now” world around them which they use as a laboratory for their explorations. They are interested in what the people they know are doing and in how things work. They take in this world around them primarily through their five senses and their muscle experiences—not through words. They are natural investigators, explorers, scientists on a young level. (Mitchell, 1953, p. 275)

All three of the schools we studied had some version of a long-term integrated study that resembled the original Neighborhood Study developed by Mitchell, in

which her students originally investigated Upper Manhattan. As Field and Bauml (2011) describe,

From earth science and man-made inventions, children would investigate the city's water supply, sound-conducting materials, coal and cement, electric engines, fire engines, tugboats, derricks, mail-canceling machines, among others. Additionally, the children were to learn about the relationships of people to people as individuals: "Largely individual, more play and work in groups"; and in communities: "relation of neighborhood workers to children's lives." (p. 120)

Mitchell's original curriculum emphasized field trips that provided children and the teacher opportunity to investigate the ecosystem of the neighborhood. Mitchell's trips focused on Manhattan and were pertinent to 1950:

- Street trips to see vegetable wagons, grocery trucks, and the dairy store
- Riverside Drive to compare boats and bridges with those on the Harlem River
- Fire Station, Engine Co. 69
- Print shop—145th Street between Broadway and Amsterdam

At all three Bank Street-affiliated schools we investigated, curriculum involves children in real-world investigations that provide opportunity to discover the relationships between materials, space, and ideas and give the facts meaning. That focus is instantiated in the schools' integrated studies, extended social studies units at each grade level that serve as the focal point of the curriculum for the year.

The integrated studies curriculum at the three schools begins with concepts that are close to students such as home and family. Students then use what they have learned about their own cultures, neighborhoods, and belief systems to learn to look outward to faraway places as well as events and people in history. Students are taught the skills to formulate meaningful questions and look for answers that lead to deeper understanding of content knowledge.

The following are examples of the integrated studies units at the core of the curriculum in the three schools we visited:

Pre-K:	The Self, Families and Babies, How Things Change
Kindergarten:	Birds, Dinosaurs, The Shore, Family, Fairy Tales, Me
First grade:	Theater, Neighborhood, School, Restaurants

Second grade:	New York City, Rocks and Minerals, Bridges and Subways, Parks, Transportation
Third grade:	China and Africa (history and geography), South Africa, New Amsterdam, World Communities, The Lenape
Fourth grade:	Colonial Times (New York State), Native Americans, Woodland Ecosystems, West Africa, Settlement/Colonial Times, Revolutionary War, Civil War
Fifth grade:	Mayan Culture, The Holocaust, Civil Rights, Westward Expansion, Immigration, U.S. Government

For Andrew, the second and third grade special education teacher at Midtown West, integrated social studies social studies are “that umbrella that everything is falling under.” He explains that even though his students may be working on academic units not based centrally on their social studies unit, such as subways and bridges in second grade, he works hard to make connections to the integrated studies in other areas, including math, writing, and read-alouds. Additionally, art is incorporated in all of the integrated studies both in the regular classroom and in the arts courses: Frank, the art teacher, structures his curriculum for each grade level around the studies they are doing, whether it is building bridges with newspapers and cardboard or designing costumes for the first grade musical.

Andrew’s colleague, Darren, a Bank Street graduate and K–1 loop and at Midtown West, feels that the integration piece is why social studies almost needs to be at the core of his curriculum:

The social studies piece is so important...I would say if I could take the social studies core out of it, I wouldn’t know how to teach; ’cause it’s so much easier for me to see reading and writing, how to connect through a study, rather than as all separate things.

This sentiment was echoed by Bank Street graduate Marcus, who teaches special education at Brooklyn New School: “Social studies as the core...It forms the glue. Everything else seems to get sort of tacked onto it...That I feel is a Bank Street type of thing to do.”

This integration of other content areas into social studies is clear in every classroom you walk into at the three schools we studied. Rulers and pencils can be found scattered on the floor beside the large model bridges in second grade at Midtown West. Student-written reflections on the “global village” are hanging on the walls of the third grade classrooms at Community Roots, alongside signs that pose questions such as, “Are resources accessible to all?” or “Are everyone’s needs being met?”

above graphs demonstrating the disparity in the distribution of money, food, and other resources among countries across the globe. Books about birds and the seashore are abundant in the shelves of the kindergarten classrooms at Brooklyn New School, while the kindergarten shelves at Midtown West and Community Roots are filled with texts on families. As Midtown West 2–3 grade loop teacher Beth notes when speaking about her school’s approach to curriculum: “Social studies in the middle, and then everything else.”

The interviewees we spoke to link the integrated social studies curricula at their respective schools to the Bank Street approach. Community Roots principal Allie Keil notes that integrated studies at her school originated from her preparation at Bank Street:

That’s all Bank Street...They can take credit for that. I think we are very, very clear...It’s like my tagline: If you ask our kids what they’re studying they’re going to say, “the neighborhood” or “Civil Rights.” They’re not going to say “reading and writing.” We take that seriously, that kids need to be immersed in really meaningful content, and then you need to give them the skills as readers or writers to access that. I think the classrooms come alive around social studies.

The teachers we interviewed and observed in our case study schools embrace the principles of social studies as both central to their school ethos, but also as integral to their own classroom practice. They describe their work to create integrated social studies units as intentional, deliberate, and conscious. They also are able to link their understanding of the principles of social studies to their coursework at Bank Street. As one teacher says,

I think back to the social studies class at Bank Street. I think I made a subway curriculum that was geared [to] second graders. I was thinking about: “What are the sources? What are the documents? What are the pictures? What are the trips that kids can go on and really experientially learn that way?” That’s a Bank Street value or practice.

Engaging with Outside-of-School Environments through Carefully Planned Field Trips

A fundamental principle of a social studies curriculum that follows the Bank Street approach rests on the belief that children build understanding through the relationships they have with the outside world. Through well-planned and carefully scaffolded engagements with environments outside of school, children learn from a combination of direct experience, reflection, and guided study. From the outset of Bank Street, Mitchell organized a curriculum that brought students on a range of field trips to study the geography of place, meet people in their native context, engage in direct and careful observation of a setting, and study and engage the social

and cultural concerns that make up what she called the “human geography.” This approach to field trips is in contrast to the more common and traditional approach to school field trips, which tend to be more ad hoc or peripheral in their orientation and design.

The role of field trips as an organizing element of the social studies curriculum emerged in our examination of the Bank Street-affiliated schools. The following example from Midtown West shows how trips guide student learning and experience in a second grade social studies curriculum focused on bridges:

Two boys sit on the floor amidst a jumble of LEGO pieces and wooden blocks. They have a plan and are systematically assembling three multicolored LEGO stanchions. “Hi, Andrew, come here and look at this,” one of the boys says to the teacher. The student is wearing bright white sneakers and a New York Yankees T-shirt.

Andrew’s adult-sized sneakers look somewhat dissonant amidst the miniature Lego pieces. “Hmmm, let’s see what happens when you put this together,” says Andrew, who teaches a self-contained special education class.

The boys quickly lay a LEGO roadway across the two stanchions and create a representation of a bridge. Andrew watches them and then says, “Okay, let’s give it a test,” and he pulls a large imposing textbook and lays it across the span of the bridge, which immediately arches inward. “Okay, fellows, what happened?”

A quick conversation ensues about counterbalancing and considering whether a suspension system would hold the integrity of the causeway. The LEGO bridge eventually collapses into itself. The boys grin together and start working again on their structure. “Andrew—” the other boy says, “I know what we’re going to do. We’re going to add some strength.” Andrew grins, shakes his head, and says, “Okay, back at it. And remember, let’s build something stronger than the Tappan Zee,” and he laughs. “We went to visit and study the Tappan Zee Bridge in Tarrytown—remember that?” he says to the class.

One of the Midtown West second grade social studies units is the Bridges and Subways Study. In classic Bank Street fashion, the study focuses on a combination of the historical, geographical, social, and community contexts that helped shape the history and utility of the bridge. In addition, science, math, literacy, and the arts are all woven into the study along the way.

In order to engage and support children in a deep understanding of the many facets of bridges, the teachers designed a series of trips that included the Brooklyn Bridge, the Queensboro Bridge, the 145th Street Bridge, and a Circle Line tour where the boat circumnavigates Manhattan island and crosses under 20 bridges.

The teachers at all of the schools we studied believe in the educative power of moving children “out of the classroom and into the world.” The role of the field trip is a pedagogical anchor throughout the schools. As one principal explains,

Field trips are an integral part of the school. I think there’s the expectation from teachers, students, and parents that we will participate in field trips. We do about 20 to 30 trips a year. The idea being that the trips will enhance the learning that occurs in the classroom, that the trips are intimately connected to curriculum, and that it will provide an experience for kids that otherwise they would not be able to get being in the classroom.

Bank Street professor Salvatore Vascellaro’s book *Out of the Classroom and Into the World* articulates a framework of ideas that support why teachers should venture on trips with students. These ideas correspond to many of the explanations we heard around the significance of trips for children’s learning:

- enables learners to experience the deep connections that exist between the physical and social worlds around them and understand how these connections affect their lives...;
- builds on learners’ natural desire to make sense of and be competent in their environment and sparks their imagination and stimulates questioning and the search for explanations;
- uses what are commonly called “the skills”—reading, writing and math—and “the arts”—painting, drawing, music, and movement—in service of learners’ investigations and in representing and deepening their experiences;
- fosters a community in the classroom that includes the people and places learners have encountered; this process of going out into the world together and the discussions and shared work that follow all offer the learning opportunities essential to community;
- enlarges a learner’s circle of understanding, caring, and commitment through the encountering of the realities of others (Vascellaro, 2011, p. 9).

The culminating project for the Bridge Study at Midtown West was designed in collaboration with faculty from Bank Street. Students are expected to develop a plan to replace the Tappan Zee Bridge, which crosses the Hudson River from Tarrytown to South Nyack. Over the spring, students had studied urban bridges, such as the Robert F. Kennedy Bridge, which connects Queens, Manhattan, and the Bronx. They also studied rural bridges. The trip to study the Tappan Zee involved a train trip to suburban

Tarrytown and an investigative walk around the leafy suburbs of Westchester County. We met with the second grade teachers to learn more about their plans for this project:

The second grade classroom is deserted, but the jumble of models, sketches, draft plans, and illustrations give it the feel of an architect's office in the midst of an impending deadline. "They are getting ready for their presentation," says Kevin, a 2-3 grade loop teacher. "We studied every aspect of bridges from what they are used for, how they are designed, and how they connect the five boroughs. We looked at the science of bridge building, the economics of what they mean, and the sociology of how the bridge and communities connect."

He points to a whiteboard that lists the questions: What do bridge designers think about? What shapes would be best for each bridge? "At each bridge we visited, we did sketches," Kevin says. "We really focus on understanding the shape and structure of the bridge. We sketch top view, horizon view, side view and front view, bird's-eye view—all of which helps us understand the structure."

He then picks up a student watercolor painting that resembles the Brooklyn Bridge's iconic shape. "One of our favorite trips is our study of the Brooklyn Bridge. We walk across, and they learn the story of [the bridge's designer John A.] Roebling and how the father died and the story behind the tragedies that plagued the building of the bridge."



The teachers introduced the Bridge Study's final project in the context of a major policy speech by President Barack Obama about the importance of investing in America's transportation infrastructure. Students listened to a recording of his speech, which was delivered at the Washington Irving Boathouse on the Hudson River in Tarrytown. President Obama proclaimed that the United States needs to do:

a better job rebuilding our roads, rebuilding our bridges, upgrading our ports, unclogging commute times. The alternative is to do nothing and watch businesses go to places that have outstanding infrastructure.

And behind me is the old Tappan Zee bridge, the longest bridge in New York and one of the busiest bridges around. As any commuter will tell you, it is crowded. (Laughter.) It carries a lot more traffic than when it was built back in 1955. At times, you can see the river through the cracks in the pavement. Now, I'm not an engineer, but I figure that's not good. (Laughter.)

The project students undertook involves bringing all that they had learned through their trips, lectures, readings, interviews, sketching, and study to do the following task, posted prominently in the classroom:

The Job: We are all bridge designers and the Tappan Zee Bridge is failing. Obama wants a new, safer, sturdier bridge to cross the span. It is your job to figure out a new bridge that serves multiple functions.

The Site: The bridge connects Tarrytown and Nyack along a wide span of the Hudson River. The river is very deep and very busy with many types and sizes of boats. Both sides of the river are approximately the same height.

The Challenge: The Hudson River is a tidal river so the water level goes up and down at different points of the day. It is an extra long span with heavy traffic going over and underneath it throughout the day. The taxpayers want a bridge that is both functional and pretty to look at, something that blends into the suburban area.

Things to Consider: The taxpayers are nervous about the bridge cost. In choosing certain materials make sure that you are not wasteful and that you place materials through the bridge wisely.

The project embodies the Bank Street approach to social studies as it invites students to work with live tensions and weighty trade-offs that occur when a community engages with work that has purpose and relevance. Long-time Bank Street educator Charlotte Winsor, described the goal of social studies as being ultimately about

relationships—man and his environment, physical and social, scientific and artistic. The frame of reference remains our own community. The likenesses and the differences among peoples are constantly examined against the pattern of our culture. A way of life as an adaptation to man's environment is the major concept stressed and developed. (Winsor, 2014/1952)

Field trips are particularly important for children to understand these various relationships because students can observe for themselves how the relationships work. Learning to carefully observe and thereby better understand the world around them is central to the Bank Street approach to teaching and learning: “Another kind of experience has to do with helping children to become increasingly sensitive to the world in which they live; to become keen observers of what there is around them; to have open eyes and ears to their surroundings” (Biber, 1967, p. 3).

As Midtown West 4–5 grade loop teacher Paige puts it: “Field trips give kids a way to access the information in a very real kind of way.” She adds, “Field trips are really important here at this school and just sort of that experiential thing. That to me is very Bank Street-y.”

Trips give children a chance to observe and collect data in the field, which aligns with Mitchell's vision of the classroom being a laboratory where children can make observations, reflect, and experiment with their learning.

Learning to observe the world around them is the primary goal of the field trips that are part of the integrated studies in Bank Street graduate Liliana's kindergarten classroom. At the Brooklyn New School, where Liliana works, all kindergartners start the year with a Bird Study. Liliana explains that birds are both something the students can relate and connect to and that they can explore in their local community: “We wanted to choose something that the kids would get a chance to see up closely; that they see that's part of their environment outside from school.” She describes the Bird Study as a prime opportunity for students to develop their observational skills and understanding of the topic of inquiry through the use of trips:

We start off with birds generally, and then we zoom in to pigeons. We go on nature walks. We study the different morphs of pigeons. We tally-mark how many pigeons they're seeing outside. Then we come back and we focus on the different kinds of feet and different kinds of beaks. We ask how these might help the different birds. This is all tied in with the field trips that we go on to Prospect Park, the zoo, where we look at these birds. So we are trying to connect what was introduced in the classroom with what you're seeing outside of the classroom.

Then we talk about, “What happens to the pigeons in the winter? Do they hibernate? Do they migrate? Do they stay in Brooklyn?” Every year we try different ways to encourage our little ones to be creative and use their imaginations, but also to engage in observational drawing and sketches, which we use when we’re going on field trips.

Revelations that come out of student observations direct the future exploration the teachers facilitate. The observations that students make on their field trips in nature and in their community become the jumping off point for the curricular activities that take place in their classroom laboratory. It is therefore essential that Liliana plan multiple opportunities for students to actively observe and explore their surroundings in a hands-on manner. Through these experiences, the young scientists in Liliana’s classroom become careful observers who deepen their thinking and their understanding of the natural world. Liliana notes:

It also gives them a chance to go out. I know we plan a lot of field trips because we value the actual contact, for students to be in contact with nature. Hands-on. The student is the guide in their learning. This is a project-based way to explore birds and the shore through a multisensory approach. So it’s not only listening to what the teachers might have to say about the shore, it’s actually you going out and you bringing back and sharing what you noticed. And this starts to create this whole idea of: you are a scientist, you’re a learner, you’re an artist, you’re a reader, you’re a writer. It’s like you can be anything you want to be.

In this classroom laboratory, students not only observe and experiment to learn more about the world around them, but they can also use their observations and explorations to learn more about themselves and the different types of identities they can take on as learners interacting with the world. Through field trips—and the opportunities for observation and discovery they offer—children are able to experience the world for themselves, which helps them construct meaning.

Community Roots teacher and Bank Street graduate Oliver believes that the value of field trips evident in the schools we examined is closely tied to a theory that drives a lot of Bank Street pedagogy: “The wall between the classroom and the field should be transparent.” Oliver expresses that Bank Street graduates feel a strong commitment to “this sort of Deweyan idea of the classroom as a laboratory. And so the classroom is a space that we use to understand the world around us. The classroom is not separate from the rest of the world.”

He continues that this merging of the classroom and the outside world during field trips becomes particularly important as students move away from their immediate surroundings and toward more abstract places, histories, and people:

History is about people, and it's about lived experience. And [children are] hearing so much...“Well, this is the way that it was.” Or they're reading stories from people. And they're very much transitioning from being really concrete to being more abstract. And having this concrete experience I think is something that a lot of them express a desire for [and respond to, saying:] “It's hard for me to imagine this! How did they not have this? How did they not have a refrigerator? What did they do?” And all of these things become so much more clear when they're in the field.

Oliver and other Bank Street graduates like him believe that field trips are an essential tool for providing students an authentic sense of the historical content they learn in their integrated studies units:

We can't make that connection [between the social world and the classroom] if we're not out in the world all the time. Leaving the classroom and then bringing the world back into our classroom...the kind of experiential knowledge that children gain from being on a field trip, [like] a spatial awareness [that] Philipsburg manor is really far away...“We know that this is where the land started, and it took us 30 minutes from this spot to get to the manor. That gives me a bodily sense of how much land they owned.” They can't get that if they're just sitting on the rug all day and I'm telling them, “It's a lot of space. It's this many miles.” It doesn't mean anything. Whether it's that to actually turning the stone of the gristmill? There's a different kind of knowledge....if I said to them while they're sitting on the rug in the fluorescent light, “It's really heavy.” That might be meaningful to some of them. But it's totally different when you've got eight kids pushing this giant stone and they're like, “Oh, my God. This is so heavy. This is such hard work.”

It is this authenticity that Bank Street graduate and first grade teacher at Brooklyn New School Richard says is what makes children's “learning connected to the world.”

The role of “pre-tripping” in the Bank Street approach to field trips. Before taking children on field trips, teachers at the three Bank Street-connected schools we studied go on “pre-trips,” or what Johanna from Midtown West calls “previewing” the field trip. She told us about the pre-trip process that she and Beth recently went through in preparation for their second grade trip to the George Washington Bridge:

At the beginning of the week that the second graders are going to visit the George Washington Bridge, Johanna and Beth “preview the trip,” meaning that they walk across the bridge themselves to see what it is like. As they cross the bridge, they

consider and discuss the various challenges of bringing 56 children across the GW, as well as what they want the students to notice. When Johanna and Beth most recently crossed the GW, they particularly loved the idea that it was going over the Hudson River; they knew that they were going to incorporate that fact into the students' "trip sheet"—a handout that guides the students through their data collection during the trip investigation. Johanna and Beth also discussed having the students think about what it means to be "joined by a river or separated by a river," and they made notes to add related questions to the trip sheet.

In addition, their proximity to New Jersey stood out to the teachers. They decided to have their students think about how seeing the closeness between New York and New Jersey helps them to better understand the notion of the Tri-State Area, which comes up often in the news and in their conversations at home. Johanna and Beth also thought about how important it would be for students to compare the two states. By standing and looking at New Jersey, they hoped their students might realize that New Jersey was not all that foreign and, at least from the perch of the GW, actually looked rather similar to New York.

In addition to coming up with some aspects of the bridge, the local geography, social connections, and the like that they wanted the students to focus on while working on their trip sheet, Johanna and Beth considered the logistics of crossing the bridge with their two classes. They thought about, "How far are they going to go? How long will it take?" Johanna explains, "In the case of the George Washington Bridge, we realized that if we walked all the way to the New Jersey side...unfortunately, there was nowhere to go when we got off the bridge on the Jersey side that was safe to be." There was no area for the class to sit as a group and talk, only space for cars to drive by. Because of this, Johanna and Beth decided that the class "would walk halfway across the George Washington Bridge, as close as we could to the land so the kids could say, 'I'm in New Jersey!'" They also thought about which day of the week would be best to go, looking up whether there were events like bike races happening on the bridge and considering when it might be most congested. Johanna and Beth were highly aware that many cyclists as well as pedestrians cross the bridge. This guided them to think about what lessons around safety they wanted to do with their students (e.g., walking in a single file line because the pedestrian walkway is so narrow) and how many parent chaperones they should have.

The pre-trip is of great import to Johanna and Beth because it allows them to "tailor the trips more according to what [their] kids' needs are and what [they're] doing in school." Johanna explains:

When we do it ourselves, we can first of all present the trip sheet in a way that adds on or builds on what we've already been discussing and thinking about in class and that would kind of push them a little bit more...Also, we want to be knowledgeable, too. We want to feel

like we have something to offer to the kids. And if we don't have the opportunity to think through ourselves and find out, then I feel it—then it just becomes a trip for a trip's sake rather than a real learning experience for all of us.

It is because of this that Johanna, Beth, and other Bank Street graduates “pre-trip” every trip that they take their students on. The pre-trip process also enables the teachers to guide the trip experience for the students in ways that give it richer meaning, building on what the students have already learned about in class, and expanding the learning opportunities by providing purposeful, guiding experiences in the field.

Community Roots teacher and Bank Street graduate Oliver says that the pre-trip is something directly connected to Bank Street's approach to curriculum:

That's something that gets really drilled into teacher candidates at Bank Street...“You don't ever do prepackaged trips. You pre-trip the trip.” Because you have to know your content really well. When you go on a field trip, nothing should be a surprise to you. And it should be targeted to exactly what you are trying to do with this unit. If you turn it over to a museum...[t]he museum could be the best museum in the world. But if it doesn't fit with everything else that you're doing, it's hard for the kids to fit that into their preexisting schema. It's really just about aligning the field experience with the classroom experience.

Field trips in the Bank Street approach are not ad hoc expeditions to get out of the classroom or “trips for trips' sake.” They are thoughtful components of integrated studies curricula that are designed to both build on what students already know about their units of study and spark additional questions that inform the teacher in guiding the students to deeper knowing and exploring. In order for such depth of learning to take place during a field trip, the teacher must thoughtfully plan for the experiences their students will have. They need to know the surroundings that their students will discover. The pre-trip emerges from Mitchell's vision of the teacher's role in the laboratory classroom:

It becomes the first task of a teacher who would base her program with young children on an exploration of the environment to explore the environment herself. She must know how her community keeps house—how it gets its water, its coal, its electric power, its food, who are the workers that make the community function. She must know where the pipes in her room lead to, where the coal is kept in the school, when the meters are read and by whom; she must know the geographic features which characterize her particular environment and strive constantly to see how they have con-

ditioned the work of which she is a part and how they have been changed by that work. And when she knows all this and much, much more, she must keep most of it to herself! She does not gather information to become an encyclopedia, a peripatetic textbook. She gathers this information in order to place the children in strategic positions for making explorations, in order to plan trips which will lead to significant discoveries, in short, in order to use her environment as a laboratory. (Mitchell, 1934/2001, p. 15-16)

Arts Infusion Throughout the Curriculum

Our aim is equally to turn out students whose attitude toward their work and towards life is that of the artist. To us, this means an attitude of relish, of emotional drive, a genuine participation in some creative phase of work, and a sense that joy and beauty are legitimate possessions of all human beings, young and old. (Mitchell, 1931, p. 251)

Mitchell's mission to develop a program that prepared teachers to undertake teaching as an endeavor fusing the systematic methods of a scientist with the creative open-mindedness of an artist is embodied in the curricular approaches of current Bank Street graduates. The infusion of art is integral in the Bank Street approach to teaching and learning and can be seen throughout the classrooms of its graduates. While relatively few Bank Street graduates elect to become art specialists (7%, as compared with 6% of teachers in our comparison sample), they leave the college understanding the critical importance of the creative and artistic process. Opportunities for children to represent and express what they know through a variety of artistic forms are infused throughout the interdisciplinary curriculum of Bank Street graduates. Mitchell's vision of combining the scientific with the creative is vibrantly present in the curriculum design and in the classrooms of Bank Street graduates. Students engage with an array of materials, produce their own art, study and adhere to the artistic process, and develop the skills to "read" and understand a variety of artistic forms from visual art and music to architectural objects and the study of theater. Celebration of and intellectual engagement with the arts is central to teaching and learning in the classrooms of Bank Street graduates. As one of the principals told us, "We're an arts-focused school. We value the arts."

"Are you happy?" A young second grader stomps her feet together and raises her fists up in front of her chest, making a T formation with her body.

The students in the audience lean forward and respond, "Yes!"

"I can't hear you. Are you happy?!" The young girl stands firm as she prompts the audience to shout louder in response.

"Yes!" they reply.

Another student positioned in the clump of dancers standing on the right side of the stage counts, “5-6-7-8!” The dancers begin stomping in total synchrony.

In the audience, eyes widen and mouths gape in awe at the professionalism of the young step dancers on stage. The dancers direct themselves, as various children from the group call out different steps and numbers to signal transitions. The run-through of this number concludes with the performers exiting the stage to Pharrell Williams’ song “Happy,” while the audience sings and dances along in their seats. This is just the beginning of a series of dances and choral performances Midtown West School has put together for its spring show. Throughout the two-and-a-half hour dress rehearsal, the students watch each other in amazement, directing their focus to the stage as soon as they hear music playing or being sung.

The young artists at Midtown West showcase their talents three times a year in the auditorium they share with the Professional Performing Arts High School. In early December, the school puts together a winter concert for the holiday season. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day brings about a social justice and diversity-themed concert. In May, the students close out the year with their spring show. This is all in addition to the various plays, musicals, and graduation dances students at different grade levels participate in throughout the year.

Artwork is also regularly on display at Midtown West, the walls filled with work created by students in Frank’s art studio and in their regular classrooms. Each extended study has at least one major art project that the students work on with Frank. Creating art happens in each of the classrooms as well, as students work on art projects related to their grade-level curricula. Numerous extended-day activities and clubs also focus on the visual arts. The classrooms have open bins full of artists’ supplies for students to use, for example, to create covers for their writing work, draw pictures to go along with their mathematical problem-solving, and paint images of things they experience on their field trips.

The performing and fine arts were prevalent at all three of the schools that we studied. At all of these Bank Street-affiliated schools, the arts are taken just as seriously as any other



academic content area. This approach to the arts as an integral part of learning mirrors the arts emphasis at Bank Street College. Bank Street's founders saw the arts as "central to children's developing understanding of their world" (Gwathmey and Mott, 2014). The classroom, then, was to be just as much an artist's studio as it was a scientist's laboratory. Edith Gwathmey and Ann-Marie Mott (2000), art instructors at both Bank Street's School for Children and Bank Street's Graduate School, explain, "The visualization of experience through art can enrich and deepen children's ability to make meaning from their lives and work in school. Art, along with other subjects, is a means for investigating, hypothesizing, and discovering essential relationships between self and world" (p. 140).

Alumna and longtime faculty member of Bank Street Harriet Cuffaro (1991) refers to materials as the "texts of early childhood" (p. 16); materials are also one of the "texts" used to educate teachers studying at Bank Street, with the college's students experiencing firsthand the excitement of discovery, invention, and mastery. This is the rationale for many workshops in which students paint, model clay, make collages, build with blocks, make musical instruments, work with manipulative math materials, stretch, leap, and dance. The purpose of engaging student teachers in manipulating materials in Mitchell's view is to:

allow the [student-teachers] to experiment directly with color (painting), form (clay and drawing), movement (dance and dramatics) and an experimental attitude is taken in language and music—art media more difficult to think of as undictated. What happens inside the students we consider more important than the quality of their products. We are eager to have the student-teachers apply their experiences directly to the curriculum for children. (Mitchell, as cited in Nager & Shapiro, 2000, p. 131)

The link between the arts-embedded curricula at the schools we studied and their Bank Street roots are clear. Just as artistic expression and discovery are interwoven throughout the graduate program at Bank Street, so are opportunities for children to paint, dance, act, build, and sing in the schools where the graduates teach.

Bank Street Preparation in the Arts. The centrality of art is a curricular focus of a Bank Street education. Bank Street offers a number of courses that focus directly on arts education, such as Arts Workshop for Teachers, Music and Movement: Multicultural and Developmental Approaches in Diverse and Inclusive Settings, and Singing in the Early Childhood Classroom. However, much of the art education at the college emerges in the context of other disciplines, using embedded art projects as an integral tool in the interdisciplinary classroom while also promoting the value of offering students opportunities to explore and pursue art for art's sake. For example, Curriculum Development through Social Studies includes "the infusion of

technology and the arts” (Bank Street College of Education, 2014b).

Though historically preparation in the teaching and integration of the arts has often been marginalized or even nonexistent in many teacher preparation programs, Bank Street continues to teach art as deeply enriching and essential, as well as instrumental. Bank Street graduates report feeling substantially better prepared to teach in the creative arts than do teachers who graduate from other programs. Bank Street graduates also report being effectively prepared to create an interdisciplinary curriculum and use a wide variety of assessments. These skills enable them to more readily and thoughtfully embed art projects into their curriculum design. Both the survey of Bank Street graduates and the school and classroom case studies demonstrate that Bank Street graduates create interdisciplinary curricula in which art infusion plays a significant and meaningful role.

As noted by several Bank Street alumni via the Teaching Program Survey, the focus on arts instruction and arts integration, and the modeling of those practices in their teaching program, had a meaningful impact on their preparation experiences and current teaching practices:

- I received an excellent teacher education from Bank Street. The teachers and staff were knowledgeable and supportive, especially my advisor....Bank Street also taught me a ton about art education for young children as well as music. I really enjoyed these classes and teachers.
- Two of the things I found very helpful in my coursework were the course on math and the art course. Both helped me think about teaching in ways that I had not before.

The Arts in Integrated Studies. *At Community Roots, a door swings open and students spill into the classroom. It's late morning and despite the air conditioning, the school feels humid and the air is heavy. The 25 fifth graders in the class move with the lethargy of tweeners amidst a long day.*

As they amble into the room, Oliver, the teacher and a Bank Street graduate, turns, smiles, and with a bracing energy greets each student individually by name. The students are returning from music class, and Oliver is geared up because the class is in the final stage of a collaborative playwriting effort. The students greet Oliver with smiles and nods, but tumble down into their seats with an apparent sluggishness about them. Oliver is nonplused: "Can you quietly move to the cart and pick up your laptops. We need to get started."

While the students were at music, Oliver was busy preparing for the afternoon's lesson. The class was in the midst of an integrated studies unit on the Civil War. The

culminating project of the study would be a series of plays written, staged, and performed by the students in pairs or small groups. The plays were to address a central question in the class's historical studies, while integrating curricular aims in writing and the dramatic arts.

Before the students returned from music, Oliver had set out thick manila folders on each desk. The folders contained drafts of their plays and a series of tracking forms that were designed to help students track their progress and move toward completion.

As the students move to the cart and pick up their laptops, Oliver moves to the side of the room and points to a chart paper titled "Playwriting Process Chart." The right side of the chart paper has three subheadings: drafting, revising, and editing. Each of the headings has a checklist underneath, for example:

Revising:

Improving the quality of scene

Purposeful dialogue

Clear stage directions and punctuation

On the left side, bright blue sticky notes indicate where each individual student is in the process of completing the play. "I will be coming around to meet with each of you and then your group. Please figure out where you are. For example, Johnny—you are in the revising stage, and I want you to be ready to explain what you will do to move yourself into the polishing and editing stage." As Oliver explains this, he pulls a sticky note in an exaggerated and clownish motion, conveying what it would mean to move through the process. His action gets a laugh, and then he steps toward the front and says, "One more reminder: Our question is 'Why did the South secede?' Keep this in mind and remember strong writers write purposeful dialogue."

Even while Oliver is finishing, this droopy group of students starts to move purposefully around the room. They gather their papers, pick up laptops, and move into small groups. One freckled boy wearing a tie-dyed T-shirt stands up, precariously balancing a computer and a pile of drafts. He is small and young looking, and he shuffles over in his blue Crocs to a boy who is a head taller. They look disparate in age, maturity, and ethnicity, but the smaller boy walks up to his peer, jabs his finger at his laptop screen, and confidently asks, "What do you think about this?"

In the meantime, in just a few minutes Oliver has circled around the room twice. The first time he moved, he held speed-meetings with nearly every student. He quickly scanned each student's folder, monitored the student's set up, and gave quick encouraging nods or pointed with his finger at what he intended each student to do. After this initial series of check-ins, which focuses all of the students on the task at hand, Oliver moves back through the room, meeting with students in more lengthy and focused conferences.

One boy sits back in his chair and starts studying his pen and then looks down and unties his shoelace, ties it back, and then unties it again, this time closely examining the plastic tip of the lace. He barely looks at his folder. Oliver arrives and asks, "Angelo, how are you doing? What stage of the writing process are you?"

"Revising," Angelo replies.

"What are you trying to revise...?" Oliver asks.

Angelo points to the paper, and Oliver looks it through. "If there is not a lot of action, what kinds of stage direction can you give?" Oliver asks.

Angelo shrugs, but Oliver keeps on looking at him and says, "This is so interesting to me... You are building suspense. You are writing about a prison guard. How do you think they would say these lines?"

Angelo shrugs again, and Oliver says, "Do you want to practice? You be the jail guard..."

Angelo reads, "I looked at it."

"How would he say that? What would his body or his hands be doing?" Oliver asks.

"I think he could be trembling," Angelo says,

"Yes, that is great. I can see him saying [Oliver's hands start to tremble, and he reads the line with emphasis]: 'I looked at it.'"

Angelo puts both hands on the keyboard and starts tapping away with a seriousness of purpose as Oliver moves onto another pod of students.

He sits down and reads a section just written by Louisa. He pauses and looks at her intently. "This is a powerful addition. You are the playwright, and I want you to think about how you can add suspense with your stage directions. How can you build suspense? What can an actor do with his body to add to the tension?"

She looks at him, twists her hair around her finger and says, "Well, maybe I can add something about him running." Oliver who had been standing over her shoulder

pulls over a chair and now sits down. In doing so, he conveys that he intends to be there for a longer stretch. The student gets the signal, turns to her keyboard, and begins to type. In the meantime, Oliver turns around to speak to a student who had come up to show him a new piece on his draft. After a bit, Louisa taps Oliver on the arm and says, “I imagined this on stage, and here is what I wrote: ‘Henry’s body goes limp. Both the Doctor and Nurse run to the medicine tent.’”

Oliver looks at her with tremendous warmth and genuine excitement. “You are controlling the action as a playwright. I love that idea! You send your audience a strong message.”

Playwriting is a significant artistic endeavor. Particularly writing a work of historical fiction derived from the study of primary and secondary source documents. It entails composing a context attached to the historical record and then creating a cast of characters who move through a series of human encounters within that context. The playwright must imagine the constellation of human emotions, feelings, conflicts, and actions and produce a story that moves along based on dialogue, setting, and plot. Students in Oliver’s classroom demonstrate their understanding of the Civil War and represent what they know about the culture and situation at that time through their play. In addition to showing what they have learned, they engage in a process that teaches them about the discipline and systematic steps of the artistic process as they generate an idea, draft, revise, polish, and finally present.

As one of the Community Roots coprincipals explained,

Art, to us, is heavily [incorporated] into social studies projects...we have a really nice balance of our art instruction that’s really integrated into the content of social studies, and then art projects for art projects’ sake.

Just as with Midtown West, when walking the halls and classrooms of Community Roots, a visitor gains a palpable sense of its commitment to infusing the arts into all forms of learning. Maps adorn the hallways and the walls of every classroom. Chart paper with brainstormed lists hangs from walls, and lines of twine crisscross the classrooms. Almost everywhere you look, you see murals, collages, and models that showcase human aspects of city life from bridges to parks to neighborhoods. Student work—particularly representations of literature, writing, and the visual arts—cover the walls, doors, and blackboards. The array of art forms represented throughout the three schools we studied illustrated the degree to which schools that practice the Bank Street approach use the arts as a medium for learning and expression in connection with other disciplines of study.



A Well-Rounded Education: Art for Art's Sake. *The art studio of Midtown West resembles a magical, fantastical alchemist's shop in a young adult fantasy novel. Shelves overflow with wondrous materials; shiny orbs and delicately fashioned designs, parts of moving sculptures, flutter and jangle from the ceiling. Drawings in soft pastels and canvases with blaring colors cover the wall. Baskets of buttons, knobs, and other doodads are piled everywhere. Drapes made out of bottle caps, soda pop tabs, and mashed cans cinched together by wire and paper clips cloak shelves stuffed with art supplies.*

At the front of the room, Frank steps in front of a screen projecting 12 images of a cartoon-like, blue-hued dog striking various poses. "This is George Rodrigue's Blue Dog series," Frank tells the class. Four or five students squeeze into each table, 30 students in all. The conditions are snug, but Frank leads them through interpretations and analysis of the works. "How is Blue Dog with a motorcycle different from Blue Dog with a bike?"

"What do you notice that is the same and different from one drawing to the next?" he pushes.

“As you know, when we look at work, we try to understand how the artist puts together shapes and structures. What shapes would it take to draw Blue Dog?”

He doesn’t wait for long as hands shoot up all over the room: “Ovals for the faces and ears, triangles for the chest, wavy triangles, curvy lines for the toes, arcs for the tail.” One boy wearing a bright blue Zlatan Ibrahimovic soccer jersey from the French club Paris Saint-Germain shoots his hand up, “The nose looks like a potion bottle.” A girl wearing bright pink nods and shakes her head simultaneously, “Yes, a potion bottle or a heart.”

Frank smiles broadly and gracefully pantomimes the different shapes as if he were dancing with his hands and arms, “Yes, yes—these shapes are what we will work with—just as George Rodrigues does. Thank you for being so involved in this conversation and sharing all these ideas and insights. Now we will start sketching our own Blue Dogs. Use your shapes and curves and contours.”

The noise level picks up immediately as students reach for materials. They look back and forth from the examples on the screen at the front to the paper canvases on their desks. As the chatter and restlessness amps up, Frank moves about the room peering down at the students busily working at their tables. “OK, let’s get started and focus on the work,” he says pushing his hands down as if to tamp back the noise. The room quiets as the group begins to draft their images.

One girl wearing polka dots raises her arm, and Frank leans over to look at her project. “Tell me about this,” he begins. She starts talking and Frank soon drops into a crouch, so that he is looking eye-to-eye with her. A mini-conference has commenced, while all around students are working, talking, and moving about the room to look at each other’s drafts. The conversation continues with Frank locked in on this particular student, listening and responding to her ideas. She talks and Frank nods, “Say more about what you mean,” he prods.

All of the Bank Street–affiliated schools we studied have art and music teachers on staff, supported by grants and PTA funding, when available, as well as creative budgeting with arts as a priority. The performing and fine arts are built into students’ daily schedules at all three schools. The schools also partner with a number of community artists, performance-related organizations, and parents to bring in additional opportunities for artistic expression. For example, Studio in a School helps the first graders at Midtown West create set pieces for their musicals. Free Arts NYC leads after-school art workshops for students and their families at Community Roots. At Brooklyn New School, each grade spends 15 weeks with a teaching artist from the Brooklyn Arts Exchange, learning about rehearsing and performing both song and dance. Through these various relationships, children at schools that embrace the Bank Street approach to curriculum receive a well-rounded, artistic education.

As one of the coprincipals of Community Roots, also a Bank Street graduate, noted:

Just the belief that public school children have the right to have arts education, music education, science education—those things are just being sucked out of public schools as accountability measures become crazier and crazier, and there are only two things [ELA and math] that are tested—that’s all [schools are] teaching to. So I think we both [coprincipals] strongly believe that kids need those opportunities to sing and dance and create art and all those sorts of things.

At a time when arts education has become marginalized in many public schools and relegated to extracurricular or ornamental status, the arts remains a vibrant and celebrated element of teaching, learning, and life in the classrooms of Bank Street graduates and affiliated schools. The arts invite “joy and beauty,” as Mitchell observed (Mitchell, 1931, p. 251), as well as creative exploration, deep thinking, and imaginative encounters with ideas. These forms of knowing and learning are central and celebrated within the schools we studied and the teachers we surveyed. Not only do children get to listen to, watch, and learn from some of the most accomplished artists in the country, but they also have multiple opportunities to become artists themselves. The principal at Midtown West says that the commitment to the arts stems from the belief that:

a well-rounded education is one that does include the arts. It is not just the three Rs, so to speak, that kids need to learn to love education. They need to learn to love life, and they need to learn the finer things in life, which of course the arts encompass.

Learning Through Collaborative Inquiry

For Trevor, a Midtown West 4–5 grade loop teacher and graduate of the Bank Street Teacher Leadership program, his fifth grade Math Congress is one way that students can practice and hone their problem-solving skills through scholarly discourse. This work serves Trevor’s goal of developing a community of scholars who take ownership of their learning and solve problems together. As he puts it: “I’m one of 29 in the class. We should only be focusing on [me] one-twenty-ninth of the time...It’s all about ownership. This is not called ‘Trevor’s class.’ It’s not. We’re a community.” The Math Congress is an opportunity for students to embrace this scholarly community as students are challenged to problem-solve together and defend their strategies through collective discourse. Additionally, as students are engaging in these types of scholarly endeavors, the language they use to describe their understanding is of a high intellectual caliber, something that was in evidence across the schools and classrooms we studied.

The fifth grade Math Congress is one place where this intellectual discourse is regularly practiced. It also exemplifies the student-centered orientation that Trevor and

his colleagues enacted. The Math Congress is reminiscent of the aspect that Trevor finds most memorable from his days as a student at Bank Street: “We always talk, we debrief—just constantly modifying [and] reflecting [as a class].”

The Math Congress is part of the Contexts for Learning Mathematics curriculum developed by Catherine Fosnot and her colleagues. The guiding philosophy for this curriculum is described as:

[K]nowledge emerges in a community of activity, discourse, and reflection. We learn to write by writing and discussing our writing with other writers. Similarly, we become mathematicians by engaging with mathematical problems, finding ways to mathematize them, and defending our thinking in a mathematical community....

The heart of the math workshop consists of ongoing investigations developed within contexts and situations that enable children to mathematize their lives. As children work, the teacher moves around the classroom, listening, conferring, supporting, challenging, and celebrating. After their investigation, children write up their strategies and solutions and the community convenes for a math congress. This is more than simply a whole-group share. The math congress continues the work of helping children become mathematicians in a mathematics community—it is a forum in which children communicate their ideas, solutions, problems, proofs, and conjectures to each other. (Fosnot, 2007, p. 27)

There are five components that the teacher must plan in the math workshop that Fosnot and her colleagues designed:

1. Developing the context for the math workshop,
2. Supporting students’ investigation,
3. Preparing for the math context,
4. Facilitating the math congress, and
5. Integrating mini-lessons, games, and routines to ensure a smooth flow.

The Context for Learning Mathematics curriculum dovetails with the Bank Street approach to curriculum, which recognizes children as active learners and makers of meaning. The approach emphasizes the importance of discourse within a mathematical community and advances the idea that the purpose of math education is

to develop students who can communicate their ideas, conjectures, and emerging understandings, rather than seeing math learning as limited to enhancing skill with algorithms or mere consumption and regurgitation of facts.

In Trevor's classroom, the Math Congress involves multiple steps:

First the students are posed a series of word problems. In teams of two, they use whatever models they choose to help them solve each problem. They then create posters demonstrating the models that they used along with the solutions.

Next, two pairs get together to form a math committee where one person from each pair explains the models on their posters, so that students can be exposed to a variety of strategies for solving the problems and give and receive feedback on their different approaches.

Trevor posts prompts that students write in their math journals then use as guides for their conversations during the math committees:

- *What relationship do you see?*
- *Why do you think those relationships occurred?*
- *How will you convince others of your conclusions?*
- *What problems are solved with division and which with multiplication?*

When the pairs meet as committees, there is a buzz of tough questioning followed by logical, elaborate responses. Students frequently use the prompts as guides, asking each other what the relationships are between their findings and why they used only division or multiplication when solving each problem.

Finally, the entire class convenes for the Math Congress, where teams present their work to the whole class and face pointed questions requiring them to communicate solutions and strategies with depth and clarity. Throughout the exercise, students attend carefully to the quality of their explanations, propose multiple perspectives, and engage their peers around the puzzles of the problems.

For today's session of the Math Congress, the teacher, Trevor, asks the students to work in their math committees and develop strategies for solving a complex set of problems. On the classroom Smart Board, Trevor projects a partially completed table with information about the exercise routines of several students. Each team is charged with completing the table and developing visual explanations of their work and related strategies (see Table 2, next page).

Two teams—Krysta and Annie, and Jeannie and Marlo—join together to work in math committee session:

“Do you wanna switch, because we have like a half a minute left?” Krysta looks across at Jeannie and Marlo, who promptly stand up and switch places with her.

Jeannie grabs ahold of her braid and begins explaining that the first person listed in the table, Maria, finishes four circuits around a track in a total of 120 minutes. The students must figure out what Maria’s rate per circuit is.

“We decided to draw 120 dots,” Jeannie begins.

Without skipping a beat, Annie interjects, “Is that the most efficient method?”

Jeannie lets go of her braid, stares Annie in the eyes and confidently states, “It was the most efficient for us.” She then continues, “It said to break it up into four groups and that’s what we did.” Jeannie points at four rectangles on her poster that are drawn around rows of 30 dots.

Krysta follows Jeannie’s hand with her eyes as she asks, “How did you know to put 30 of them in one section?”

“We knew 120 divided by 4 is 30,” Marlo says, tugging at the bottom of her white T-shirt.

As the pair finishes explaining that it took the runner 30 minutes to run one-quarter of the entire number of circuits, Krysta’s eyes shift to the right side of the poster. “I don’t understand that,” she says as she points to another problem: Rachel ran one-third of the circuit in 6 minutes. What is her rate per circuit?

“Ok,” Jeannie starts explaining. “Her minutes were 6, so we drew 6 dots.”

“I got a different answer,” Annie interrupts. She then asks Jeannie how she and Marlo got 18.

“Well,” Jeannie takes a deep breath then continues, “Because she completed one-

Table 2. Sample Math Problem

Name	Minutes of exercise	Number of circuits completed	Rate
Maria	120	4	
Marco	60	3	
Rachel	6	$\frac{1}{3}$	
Josh	12	$\frac{2}{3}$	
Suzanne	5	$\frac{1}{4}$	
Lucia	15	$\frac{3}{4}$	
Eileen		$\frac{1}{2}$	18 min.
Bob		2	30 min.
Julio	30	$1\frac{1}{2}$	

Note. This table of incomplete information relates to the exercise regimes of nine runners. Time and rate are expressed in minutes; distance covered is expressed in fractions of circuits around a track.

third of the circuit and not a whole circuit...because the rate is for one circuit of a whole, but she only completed one-third of the circuit and that's six. So the whole circuit is 18."

Krysta then proceeds to ask Jeannie which problems she solved with division and which ones with multiplication, and why.

While Jeannie and Marlo are immersed in explaining their reasoning for each problem, Trevor joins them and in a voice no louder than a whisper instructs them to put their posters up outside in the hallway next to each other. He then tells them to bring their notebooks, clipboards, and pencils with them back to the meeting rug area. "This should all take about two minutes," he concludes. The girls quickly and quietly move to follow Trevor's instructions.

In a matter of minutes, the entire class is sitting on the rug with their materials in their hands. There is a steady hum of conversation as students chat with each other in low voices, waiting for their teacher. Trevor sits in his chair beside a Smart Board and rings a small bell. The class goes silent. Without a word, Trevor flashes a slide on the Smart Board with instructions for the next step of the Math Congress. The students are to walk through the hallway, read one another's posters, and leave comments or questions on sticky notes for their peers.

The students share ideas about the types of comments that might be most helpful for their peers. Then Trevor instructs the students to write their names on their sticky notes and to complete the next phase in 5 minutes. The students promptly stand and begin perusing the charts hanging around the classroom and in the hallway. They quietly write praise, questions, and suggestions on their sticky notes, which they stick directly onto the posters. Examples of the students' comments include:

- "I liked how you labeled and used steps but next time maybe you can use a more efficient strategy because drawing circles could take a while. Also maybe you could write down your strategies and/or an explanation. All in all great job!"*
- "I like how you showed your work and wrote explanations for each answer."*
- "What model did you use? Area model/ratio table/double number line?"*
- "It was a little unclear on what your strategy was. Did you find any relationships in the making?"*
- "Will this strategy always work for these problems?"*

- “I don’t really understand your strategies. It was really hard to follow. Steps would have been nice.”

When 5 minutes are up, Trevor signals to the students to quietly make their way back to the rug. The students sit facing the Smart Board, which now has a bulleted list of questions for the group to ask and consider during this final portion of the Math Congress. Trevor says to the students, “Maybe we’ll get to two or three charts today,” as he stands up and walks out to the hallway. A few students whisper “Yes!” with eager anticipation, while others look at each other expectantly.

Trevor reenters the classroom holding up a poster with the names Wendy and Lee written in orange marker on the top right corner. The two students who created the poster walk up to the front of the room, take the poster from Trevor, and hold up opposite corners of the chart so it is clearly displayed. The class looks carefully at the poster and then begins to ask questions about specific problems, such as, “What was the whole?” and “Can you speak about the relationships you found?”

One student asks Lee, who is the main presenter for this pair, “How could one time around the circuit take 20 minutes if the whole time was 15?” He points to a problem in the right corner of Wendy and Lee’s poster about Lucia, who ran three-quarters of a circuit in 15 minutes. The students must figure out Lucia’s rate for one entire circuit.

Lee explains that the problem said that three-quarters of the circuit is 15 minutes, which would mean that one quarter is 5 minutes. “So for the whole circuit, just add 5,” Lee concludes. The student looks at Lee with a puzzled face. “For each fourth of a lap is 5 minutes,” Lee tries again. “So we added 5 minutes at the end to get the whole.”

This is followed by some debate about whether it would have been more “efficient” to multiply using fractions or decimals to solve the problems. Trevor transitions to another poster for the class to discuss. This poster has number lines on it for each problem. The number lines have been divided into sections marked off by small hashes. Above each number line are drawn small arches or “jumps” between the segments. Each line has only one arch that either spans the entire line or covers one segment.

A small student in a light blue polo shirt, Antonio, comes up to explain his work while his partner sits nearby: “We used a double number line to show sort of the relationship.” Tracing his finger over the curves drawn from point to point on the number lines, Antonio continues, “We used the jumps to show how long the whole circuit is.” He then points to the bottom right corner of the poster, where he and his partner wrote explanations for their work.

Antonio concludes, “We sort of got an answer that makes sense instead of a crazy answer like two,” referring to Trevor’s encouragement that students con-

The second Antonio finishes, the class starts cross talking again. Antonio calls on one student, who asks, “Will that strategy always work?” Patrick replies, “Well, not always, but depending on the number, like depending on how large or how small they are.” Lee then points to one problem on Antonio’s poster for which he got a different answer. With Trevor’s prompting, Lee stands up and goes over by his own poster, which is now hanging on top of the Smart Board, to defend his response. The two boys go back and forth about the answer, providing logical reasoning for each solution. Their classmates listen attentively, nodding and shaking their heads as they squirm in their seats, eager to share their own thoughts.

From beginning to end of this Math Congress, students are engaged in deep mathematical problem-solving, but also much more. They use intellectual discourse to critique and sharpen one another's work and to explain the rationale behind the models they use. Fifth grade math becomes just as much about developing students' language, logic, discourse, and argumentation abilities as it is about practicing computation and problem-solving skills. At Bank Street, the promotion of linguistic development is viewed as an essential element of classroom practice. For Trevor, this emphasis on intellectual language and reasoning is an integral part of having students take ownership of their own learning and deepening

[illegible]

their understanding of the mathematical content. When students are taken seriously in this way, they learn to make decisions about their learning and can, in his view, “run the class.”

Teachers still play a central role in organizing the intellectual work and forums in which students engage with one another. But these learning experiences are shaped by the student-centered orientation of the teachers—a deep respect and trust for the ways in which students can and should be directly involved and responsible for their own learning and the learning of their peers. In this way, the classroom becomes a community of scholars. This vision of a cooperative classroom community, where learning centers on collaborative inquiry, is directly related to the Bank Street approach to curriculum. As one of the coprincipals at Community Roots Charter School explained, “We don’t think that math is a set of facts and procedures that kids should learn. We believe in posing problems and giving kids the tools to figure out those problems and use those tools across contexts. I think that fits into an over-all Bank Street philosophy.”

The Bank Street approach to curriculum emphasizes the importance of intellectual, exploratory interactions among students. Biber describes the role of the teacher in this approach to curriculum and learning thusly:

[T]eaching is an interpersonal relations function. It isn’t just a matter of transmitting knowledge and being very good about how to transmit knowledge. It is a way of one person, whether you’re teaching children or whether you are teaching adults, somehow, in the way knowledge is communicated, the technique is transmitted, something happens between the people as people. (Biber, as cited in Grinberg, 2005, p. 55)

We found interactive learning driven by student-guided inquiry and exploration across the content areas in all three case study schools. This approach to curriculum is evocative of the Bank Street vision of the classroom as a laboratory. Bank Street graduates turn every curricular domain into an opportunity for students to utilize the laboratories of their classrooms and the world beyond to foster inquiry and support learning and growth as they interact with each other, with materials, with ideas and puzzles, and with the world around them.

Approach to Curriculum: Conclusion

From its earliest days, Bank Street College, founded as The Bureau of Educational Experiments, was designed to serve as a setting where educators could develop innovative progressive practices focused on the teaching and learning of young children, guided by the scientific study of human development. Inspired by a transformational mission, the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach to curriculum has come to emphasize practices that result in meaningful learning for individual

students. The Bank Street approach pursues forms of interaction between children and “the world of people, materials, and ideas” (Bank Street College of Education, 2012, p. 14) through processes that involve inquiry; experiential encounters with the physical and social world in the classroom and the broader community; and systematic, guided reflection on those encounters.

In preparing teachers to practice with a learner-centered perspective—where children engage with materials, each other, and authentic questions in the construction of knowledge—Bank Street’s curriculum for its adult students incorporates parallel principles, including choice, a variety of learning modes, and group work. The courses and practicum experiences seek to engage the college’s students in the investigative, discovery-oriented, collaborative learning experiences that are the hallmark of the Bank Street approach.

Having Bank Street graduate students personally experience this progressive approach to curriculum provides the teachers-to-be with not only a disposition for progressive education, but also the knowledge and skills necessary to teach in this way. In the Teaching Program Survey, Bank Street graduates report feeling better prepared than other teachers for subject-matter teaching in virtually all areas. When contrasted with the comparison teachers, Bank Street graduates are significantly more likely to indicate that their teacher preparation program prepared them to teach “well” or “very well” in every subject area. Observations of classroom practice showed evidence of the progressive curriculum training that Bank Street graduates received, as the graduates we observed organized experiential opportunities for children to connect their learning with the world around them.

Through the surveys and case studies of Bank Street graduates, our research identified four signature approaches to curriculum:

- The centrality of integrated social studies as an organizing feature,
- The importance of engaging with outside-of-school environments through carefully organized field trips,
- The infusion of the arts throughout the curriculum, and
- An emphasis on learning through collaborative inquiry.

Integrated social studies: Graduates who responded to the Teaching Program Survey tout the Bank Street preparation for teaching integrated social studies and view social studies as the core of the Bank Street approach to curriculum. Teacher candidates described how they learn to develop integrated social studies curricula. Bank Street survey respondents and interviewed graduates at the case study schools describe the precepts of the integrated social studies approach as central to their cur-

rent work. They repeatedly described social studies as “the glue” connecting curricular areas and a focal point for their teaching.

The approach to integrated social studies described by graduates and practiced in the case study schools involved the study of individuals and society through the integration of multiple disciplines. Teachers organized integrated studies, such as the Family Study or the River Study, around a key theme or a central set of questions that enabled students to pursue meaningful learning by connecting what was happening in school with outside-of-school contexts.

Engaging with outside-of-school environments: Mitchell’s original curriculum emphasized carefully planned field trips that provided children and teachers opportunities to construct knowledge by scaffolding experiences that connect the physical and social worlds around them. The teachers and schools we studied continued to make use of the educative power of engaging children with the outside world by scaffolding procedures that included pre-trip planning, direct experience, reflection, and guided study.

Arts infusion: The early conception of Bank Street strived to prepare students to deploy the systematic methods of science with the creative open-mindedness of an artist. The arts remain a central emphasis of the Bank Street approach to teaching and learning, which can be seen throughout the classrooms of its graduates. Though modest numbers of Bank Street graduates elect to become art specialists (7%, as compared with 6% of teachers in our comparison sample), they leave the college understanding the critical importance of creativity and the artistic process. Opportunities for children to represent and express what they know through a variety of artistic forms infused the interdisciplinary curricula in the schools we visited.

Collaborative inquiry: All forms of the curriculum appear to unfold through both the spirit of collaborative inquiry and the process itself. Children and adults alike learn content by engaging with problems and questions in situations where they must pose ideas, defend strategies, and engage in collective discourse.

Summary: The Bank Street approach to curriculum involves the durable belief that classrooms should be places where students and educators can come together as a community to undertake ambitious studies and projects. Through these collaborative inquiries that involve connections to the larger community, students develop skills and understandings, and build a commitment to positively serve the world. Barbara Biber, chair of the child development faculty at Bank Street from 1931–60, describes this aspiration: “We want the children to be aware of themselves as initiators in their learning roles, to establish their individual identities and, at the same time, to grow through the emergence of the self in the cooperative, collective group experiences of play and learning” (Biber, 1973). These come together as the Bank Street approach to curriculum.

Approach to the World

[T]he view of the teacher as a naturalist, as a scholar, as a citizen, and as a researcher, provided the possibility of lifelong learning for the student-teacher by also fostering an experimental and adventurous disposition, open-minded, and a critical perspective, which were necessary for what Bank Street envisioned. (Grinberg, 2005, pp. 65–66)

Both historical and contemporary practices at Bank Street aim for the development of teachers with a professional and community orientation to teaching. Bank Street seeks to cultivate teachers with both an ethos and the skills to foster collegiality and collaboration, inquiry and reflection, ongoing learning and growth, and community and societal engagement and advancement. The enduring project of teachers working in a professional community to create classrooms and schools animated by progressive ideals and where faculty and administrators continuously engage in the reinterpretation and critical inquiry of practice and curriculum is what defines the spirit of John Dewey’s original University of Chicago Laboratory Schools as well as Mitchell’s and Biber’s iteration of the progressive education movement at Bank Street. This orientation to the profession of teaching by Bank Street graduates was evident across elements of our study, as described in this section on Bank Street teachers’ “Approach to the World.”

The mission of Bank Street College is to improve the education of children and their teachers by applying to the education process all available knowledge about learning and growth, and by connecting teaching and learning meaningfully to the outside world. In so doing, we seek to strengthen not only individuals, but the community as well, including family, school, and the larger society in which adults and children, in all their diversity, interact and learn. We see in education the opportunity to build a better society. (Bank Street College of Education, 2014e)

The appendix of Mitchell’s book *Young Geographers* is a collection of photographs. The first photo in the collection is of a group of children and teachers huddled in front of a corner store intently focused on studying what looks like a scale. The caption reads “Five-Year-Olds exploring their neighborhood” (p. 61). The fifth photograph in the collection portrays children building a community of block structures inside their classroom. The caption reads, “Five-Year-Olds playing out impressions received in trips into neighborhoods and water-front” (p. 63). These two photos reveal children engaged in exploring the community and developing understandings about how people within a physical environment interact and relate with each other and the physical elements of their space.

Mitchell believed that children learn to know the world through the study of their home community and that this exploration propels children toward developing a progressive consciousness and a capacity for democratic living. She believed that for that to happen the preparation of teachers had to aim beyond the simple improvement of the quality of a child's education. She envisioned education as force to build a better society and believed for that to happen teachers must understand children's learning and development in the context of family, community, and culture. These values are woven throughout the Bank Street curriculum, and we found a commitment to this ethos in the survey responses and classroom practices of the Bank Street graduates in our studies. Mitchell's civic-minded vision is alive and thriving in the classrooms and schools of Bank Street graduates. It reveals itself in the way Bank Street graduates view their work as a form of social justice aimed at promoting the public good, through curriculum and practices designed to integrate family and community in a child's learning and development, through systematic practices designed to be inclusive of all children, and in the efforts of the college to intentionally prepare teachers to graduate with the capacity to undertake this work in schools and communities.

More specifically, there were four themes emblematic of the Bank Street approach to the world that emerged from our case studies and surveys: connecting to family and community; commitment to diversity and inclusivity; teacher professionalism and collaboration; and teaching to serve the public good. The following sections provide a detailed account of each theme.

Connecting to Family and Community

One little girl with her hair braided into an intricate pattern sits at a desk setting up blue and gray soldiers, horses, and other plastic figurines. The other kindergartners sit in a moon-shaped crescent in front of one of their classmates, an older brother, a mother, a father, and the boy's babysitter. The students fidget into position, each of them holding a pencil and a notepad. The family appears to be fidgeting as much as the kindergartners.

Jody watches the students squirm a bit and then calls the group to order, "Five, four, three, two, one, zero." She slowly and calmly counts down while showing the corresponding number of fingers on one hand. "I need you to find calm in your body so that we can begin to interview Sean and his family." The movement on the rug slows to a minimal hum. Once the group grows still, Sean, the student whose family is the focus of today's study, introduces his family on Jody's cue.

Jody then asks, "Who can help me ask the next question?" She points to one of the many hanging sheets of chart paper. A thin boy wearing a black Brooklyn Nets shirt shoots his hand up holding his pencil. Jody points to the question, and he reads it along with her, "Where do you come from?" Sean's mom looks at her husband with

a near pleading look for him to begin, and he takes the cue, “I’m from the country. I am from Pennsylvania.”

Jody interjects, “OK, let me write that down with you. That is a hard one, but I am going to sound-spell it ‘Pen-sil-vay-nee-yuh.’” As she writes, each member of the class diligently writes in a reporter/researcher notebook as well.

The kindergartners question each of the adults about their origin, and spend some time locating Pennsylvania and then Serbia (where the babysitter was from) on two of their large maps hanging in the room. Jody then asks for a volunteer to read the next question, “What do the grownups do?”

The mom begins, “Thank you for asking...,” but Jody interrupts and says, “If we just wait. Because there are three adults, I want to break up our note-taking box into three columns.” Jody models this on her chart paper where she is taking her “research notes” and the students follow along in their own research journals.

The mom continues, “I am a nurse and care for mothers who are getting ready to have a baby.” The children ask follow-up questions with seriousness of purpose. Some sit cross-legged, others fidget from position to position, and others sit on their knees, but they all continue to take notes in their notebooks (some in pictures, some in words). The interview continues with the questions, “What does your family celebrate?” and, finally, “What does your family do for fun?”

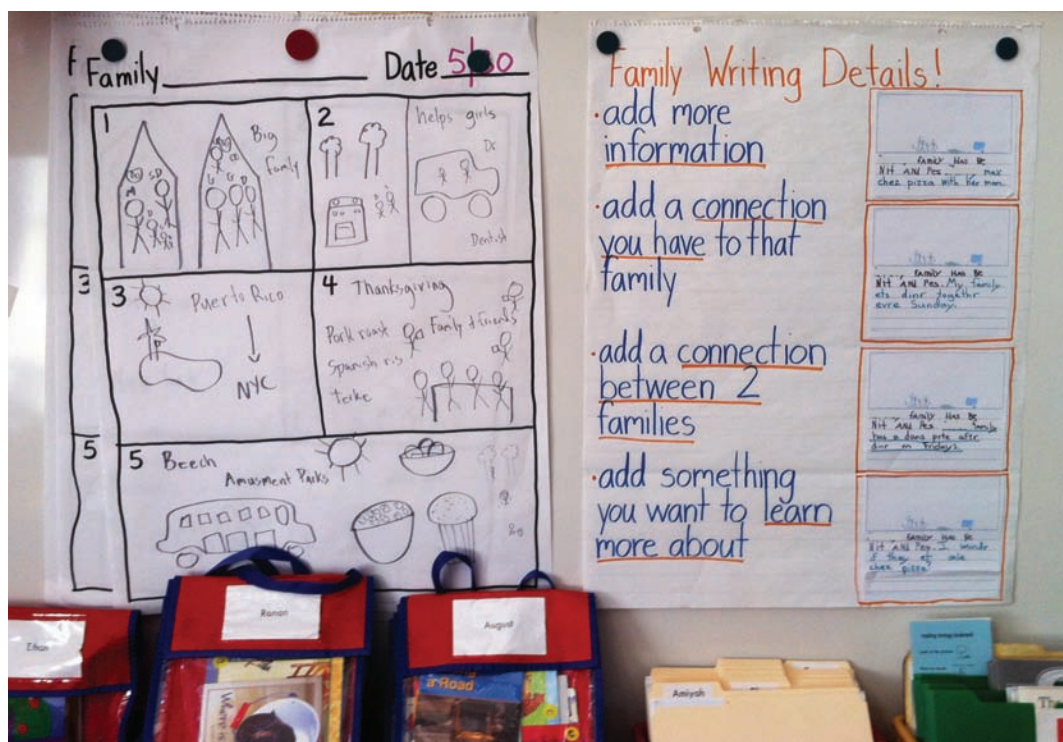
After the research interview is finished, the family breaks up into stations around the room. At each station, a family member has prepared a demonstration or activity related to something they do. Sean’s babysitter has Monopoly, one of Sean’s favorite games. At another table, Sean’s older brother displays his Civil War toy soldiers and books, reflecting his deep interest in the topic. Sean sits at a table with a set of family photo albums and a loaf of homemade banana bread, a family specialty. Sean’s mom has brought some of her nursing equipment, including some stethoscopes and other medical materials. The teachers have added a set of plastic baby dolls for the students to practice on. Sean’s father steps outside the classroom where he attempts to arrange the corner of the hallway into a mini television studio. He is a writer for Comedy Central, and his activity is to film the kindergartners telling a “funny story.” They join him in groups of three, and he has his iPhone camera rolling. “OK, tell me a funny story!” he says. The students take turns stand with their backs to the wall looking at the camera and begin, “One day...”

The Family Study is part of an extended integrated social studies unit that kindergarten students at Community Roots conduct from January to June. This integrated study builds on what students learned from two of the integrated studies from the fall, the Me Study and the Apple Study. The Me Study explores each student’s backgrounds, interests, and characteristics, a celebration of individuality and diversity, as

well as community. In the Apple Study students learn to use their senses to explore similarities, differences, and characteristics of the apple. The students then bring their emerging research and observation skills to the Family Study, which provides students an opportunity to study their family and home life and that of their peers. As described in the school's charter documents:

Studying the child's family will deepen students' understanding of themselves and their peers and how they each fit into the world that directly surrounds them. They generate systematic research questions that guide their interviews with families and take on a more active role becoming researchers themselves through learning how to observe, question, and interview, record, role play and test new ideas, and present information in a creative and authentic manner. School becomes a place where a child's home is an important part of their history. (Keil & Stone, 2005)

At the end of this extended integrated study, each student will produce a 25-page portfolio, each page a summary of their research notes about each of their classmates' families and of their own. The culminating product simultaneously reflects the students' developing research and writing skills and celebrates the cohesion and diversity of their classroom community.



The kindergarten Family Study, a quintessential Bank Street integrated social studies unit, showcases a central animating principle of the Bank Street–affiliated schools in our study: understanding and learning for children happens in active relationship with a child’s family, as well as the larger school community, neighborhood, and the world beyond. Engagement with family happens across the year and through the grades through a wide array of structures. The kindergarten Family Study draws on families as a pivotal and integral resource in a child’s learning and provides a rich source for the development of emerging research and thinking skills. It begins a coordinated developmental continuum of integrated studies and prepares kindergartners for the first grade focus on community, neighborhood, and jobs.

Several of the Bank Street graduates who taught in the upper grades also pointed back to the Family Study as being a hallmark of the Community Roots curriculum. They described it as laying the foundation for later integrated studies projects with their roots in the Bank Street approach. As one fourth grader teacher detailed,

I think of our work as trying to connect personal history to all the other skills that we need to learn: reading, writing, math, and thinking. But it begins with the personal history and then using those skills in service of learning about your environment. The Family Study in kindergarten embodies that, as the taking of our family life—our outside-of-school life—and bringing it into the school.

The focus on family and community infuses Community Roots and the other Bank Street–affiliated schools we studied in and beyond the classroom. As two of the teachers describe:

- So now I think that stuff kind of became tradition. Like the constant communication with families. The doors being open so families are coming in.
- Also, the relationship with the families is very, very important here. The fact that our administrators not only know every student’s first and last name but they know all the parents’ names as well. And there’s a sense of taking care of not just the children that go here but also the entire family unit that’s involved in the school.

And as Community Roots Principal Keil notes,

When we opened, our intentions were always very much to make this a place where families felt welcome and a one-stop shop. I’m very passionate about this idea of wraparound services and this idea that parents...Like, we have your kids for eight hours a day. We should know if there’s any stress or strife or conflict or crisis in the family, and we

want this place to feel like a place where you can come and get support. Will I always have the answer? Will someone here always have the answer? No. But we'll always support you through it.

Moving from Brooklyn to Manhattan's West Side, we found the Bank Street approach to community and family at Midtown West to be almost a mirror image of that at Community Roots. Midtown West's integrated social studies program also begins with a study of family and community. When a student starts in kindergarten at Midtown West, she is first immersed in the Family Study, a highly individual look at families with both a personal and a community focus. Her family may even be selected to serve as one of the focal families for the class study, including a class field trip to her home. She then learns about other, more distant families during the fairy tale unit that closes her kindergarten year. This child then moves on to first grade, where she is immersed in the Theater Study discussed earlier. She learns about the community surrounding Midtown West and all the players who help make the theater industry thrive. At the same time, the student will read about Virginia Lee Burton during the first grade Author Study—exploring ideas of homes and communities, themes of urban and rural life—that culminates with the creation of her own picture book featuring a “little house” or a “little skyscraper.”

In second grade, this child will travel around New York City and its suburbs for the bridges and subways study. She will learn about how the various communities of New York are interconnected. At the end of second grade, the student will take a subway ride with her classmates to Chinatown, which launches the beginning of the cultural studies of third grade. With her peers and teachers, the student will branch out from the cultural communities of New York to learn about distant peoples in China and Africa. The research and study skills she learns in third grade will help her in the next two years as she takes a leap even further away from her own life to learn about historical times. The fourth and fifth grade studies of New Amsterdam, the American Revolution, immigration, and westward expansion wrap up the child's journey with social studies at Midtown West.

One teacher explains how the integrated social studies curriculum embraces diversity and builds community:

The school itself was really founded on the principles of diversity and people coming together and celebrating that, so I think social studies is that obvious lens to frame everything. So with the history before that of just celebrating diversity and cultural celebrations, here is a way to do social studies: to start with the individual child, and then let's move into your family. Then move into your school and community, and as it keeps going through the grade levels, keeps expanding on that. So I think that's really the reason for social studies rather [being at the core].

From Learning Community to Building Community. A second form of connecting to community involves creating systems for families and the community to be involved in the learning of children. All the schools we studied had thriving programs that involved families and community members in teaching and connecting with children. As one parent explained about what it feels like to attend Community Roots:

Well, I feel like it's an outgrowth of...we live with all kinds of people, and our neighborhoods are full of all kinds of people, and our school is full of all kinds of people. And some people read really well, and some people don't. And some people have nice clothes and—it's just we're all here. ... It seems like that particular thing doesn't have to be taught in a heavy-handed way. It's really sort of natural.

This orientation to embracing the full spectrum of the community shows up in the school's after-school Community Open Work program:

The scene in the school at 2:35 p.m. on a Wednesday afternoon is a combination of jubilation and managed chaos. Roughly 300 students (K–5), nearly three dozen teachers and administrators, and around 15 parents and grandparents, are all busily moving to various spaces across the school building for the start of Community Open Work (COW). The school is a beehive of activity.

One teacher meets a small group of students at the top of the stairwell. He has several skateboards in tow and leads the group down to the ground floor where he offers a skateboarding session. The older students have their own boards and begin with some warm-up laps around the blacktop. The younger students are taking turns working in pairs, one sitting on a board and the other pushing from behind. The teacher works to outfit the students with appropriate gear while offering suggestions and encouragement to students based on their level of comfort, skill, and interest.

On the third floor, a parent is leading a woodworking workshop. Desks are now covered with saws, containers of wood glue, hand drills, angles, and grips. Students are in the midst of crafting tables, stools, and chairs. In just 10 minutes, the classroom is transformed into a busy shop, apprentices in groups of two or three working diligently, while the teacher circulates asking questions and guiding the work.

Around the entire building, 25 such workshops are underway, with teachers, parents, grandparents, and other community members sharing their talents, interests, and skills with the students of Community Roots. In addition to skateboarding and woodworking, students encounter COW workshops on embroidery, cooking, yoga, origami, and a wide range of other activities of interest.

Community Open Work is emblematic of the community orientation of Community Roots. Every Wednesday, the last hour of the school day is dedicated to community building activities. Teachers, parents, grandparents, and other community members organize and lead the COW workshops. The activities are open to students of all ages and grade levels, and students sign up for workshops based on their interests. The workshops run for about six to eight weeks, and the content ranges widely. The COW workshops and other Wednesday communal activities support building community within and beyond the school by sharing interests, organizing students into small groups, making the school accessible and engaging, bringing families and community members into the school, and generally making the school a site for community.

From the perspective of one of the teachers at Community Roots, the value of COW is in

bringing kids together from all different backgrounds and experiences. This is a huge part of the ethos of our school and we want to do that even within the school itself. So bringing together younger children with older students and parents and teachers...for that to happen; just to really mix it up.

Community is fostered, expressed, and valued in numerous other ways at Community Roots. Structurally, the school underscores the importance it places on community in the form of a full-time staff position: director of community development. The position was established a few years after the school was launched and is held by Rae, one of the school's founding teachers. When asked about the formation of this position, Rae described it this way:

My master's degree was in international educational development with a focus on family and community development. And so that was what really drew me to this school to start with. That like, yes, we believe in high expectations for our children both academically and socially and emotionally. But we also do care about their social and emotional progress and do give value to like community and what it means to be a part of the community. And so that's what really drew me to this school to begin with.

And then after a few years I just—my personal interest is in this type of work. And I think at that point [founding coprincipals] Alli [Keil] and Sara [Stone] were starting to see a need for a position kind of solely dedicated to working on programming, to really help solidify the things that were already in place and kind of move some things forward even more. In particular around like having a very diverse community and thinking about what it means to have all stakeholders,

you know, have a voice in the community regardless of where they're coming from, and feel comfortable in the community, and be able to really—that it's owned by all, even though we are in a very, very diverse place. We serve a very, very diverse community.

So that's kind of how it came about. So three years ago I moved into this position as director of community development....[R]eally it's looking at our major stakeholders. So our children and our families and our staff, and thinking about how those key players play into the larger community. Creating programming for all three of those stakeholders and then also thinking about how we're connecting with the outside community. So making connections with local organizations and working with them and having folks in here. And just doing all that. So that's like the broad strokes overview and then under each thing there's a number of programming.

The director of community development supervises numerous programs designed to foster community and connection at the school and with families, and to connect the school to the broader community. The following are among the extensive range of community-oriented programs at the school:

PALS (playing and learning squads) is a program that works to build social connections among Community Roots' diverse students and families by organizing after-school play groups and activities. At each grade level, teachers set up groups of four or five students and their families at the beginning of the year and ask parents to organize a minimum of three play dates or other activities among the students. This bit of active engineering of community relationships is designed to help build and strengthen community among the students, across the school, and within the school's diverse families.

As Sara Stone, founding coprincipal with Alli Keil, describes it:

So it actually started off with Alli. Because we're not a neighborhood school, Alli was like, "What can we do to really strengthen these relationships outside of the school building?" And she had brought it up with some teachers, and they had brought it up with some parents. And really it's completely parent-run. This thing.

...[W]hat we've found has been great is, especially with kindergarten, first, and second, is they're really starting to navigate different relationships and start to understand. Developmentally for them, it's great. So throughout the year, there's three times where they'd have play dates outside of school within a group that's chosen by teachers. So a teacher will say, "You five are together. You five are together." And

parents will lead those things. So the only job really that the teachers have is to just create the play dates and kind of like get them excited about it. But the parents plan the play dates. And so it's great 'cause you have kids who don't always get to hang out, 'cause they don't live near each other or they're not around each other all the time, going to the museum together or just going to the park together or just going to someone's house and making pizza. So that's PALS.

Buddy Read is another program aimed at building relationships and community in the school. While many schools organize classroom buddy programs, at Community Roots the organization and structure is deep and purposeful. Every class is paired with a buddy classroom in a different grade, and every student is assigned a specific buddy from the matching class, coordinated by the classroom teachers and the community development director. Classroom buddies meet regularly. At the beginning of the year, buddies work on special projects together each week around the six core values of the school: Honor Yourself and Others, Work Together, Work Hard, Help Each Other, Try New Things, and Be Reflective. Then throughout the year buddies continue to meet and build social connections through reading and other activities.

Community Builders (CB) and Learning through Service and Action (LSA) are initiatives designed to engage Community Roots' students in service projects at the school and with the broader neighborhood community. CB is a program for fifth graders who go through training to be mentors to K–2 students. They then volunteer during K–2 lunch and recess twice a week to support the K–2 students. LSA involves numerous service projects, based on the interests and research of students in the LSA group at the school. LSA also includes opportunities for Community Roots' students to engage with residents of a nearby rehabilitation center, for example, singing, reading, and playing games with its residents.

Staffle Raffle is a program where teachers raffle off opportunities for students to go with teachers on community adventures—to a local bookstore, museum, home visit, cooking experience, or the like. As one teacher put it, "It's a way to bring kids together outside of the classroom and connect with their teachers."

Numerous **parent workshops** and **clubs** are offered and promoted at Community Roots. Fostered through a combination of parent and teacher interest and the encouragement of school administrators and the community development director, parent workshops and clubs provide another forum for community building. A few of the workshops and clubs that we encountered during our visits to Community Roots include:

- **Community Chorus**, a parent and teacher musical group, led by the school's music teacher;



- **Community Open Opportunity Kitchen School (COOKS)**, a family cooking program for preparing meals and sharing recipes;
- **Community Reads**, a teacher–parent book club;
- **Parents and Children Together with Art (PACT)**, a collaboration with Free Arts NYC to provide after-school arts experiences for students and families; and
- **SPACE**, a weekly parent support group meeting to address a wide range of questions, concerns, and issues of interest to families.

In all, more than 20–25 clubs and workshops are organized for families each year. Keil points out the centrality of this work to the identity of the school:

So that is really intentional and it's work that constantly evolves, I think, and being a place of parent learning, saying, "Come in and let's do workshops. Tell us what you want workshops in. If we don't have the expertise here, we'll bring it here because why should you have to go to someplace else when you have to bring your kid here and pick your kid up here anyway," you know? And that we can learn from

families, I think, is another piece and that it's our responsibility to connect families to each other and create this network here.

And Principal Stone adds,

It works here because we really put a lot of value on each of the stakeholders, that we are not just here to educate children, but we're here to work with families and we're here to work with staff, and that caring about each one of those groups is integral into making the school work.

Similarly, Midtown West emphasizes its commitment to families and communities in its "School Philosophy," which summarizes the founding principles and ongoing commitments of the school:

We are committed to creating an environment where children, parents and staff from different ethnic, cultural, linguistic and economic backgrounds can work together to achieve a truly integrated, nurturing, academically rigorous school community.

Midtown West is proud of our successful collaboration with community partners and our groundbreaking initiatives, all of which help to develop outstanding educational programs. (Midtown West School – P.S. 212, 2014)

The school connects meaningfully with its families and community via its extended studies, numerous trips, ongoing community and arts presentations, and robust after-school programs.

This valuing of community resonates with the preparatory experiences numerous faculty and school leaders in our case study schools and surveys received from Bank Street. As Community Roots teacher Jody notes,

And then the other aspect that I got from my student teaching there [at Bank Street] is just how they foster community within their classrooms, because I was a student intern at their School for Children as well. I was lucky enough to experience that. And part of that community is really honoring that child and their whole family and who they are as a whole being.

And Joel, also a teacher at Community Roots, adds,

And so it was really nice as a recent grad to come here and be able to put all of that into action. Communicating with parents was a perfect

example of, “Yep, this is what I learned about in class. This is how we should to it.”

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusivity

A significant element of community within the schools we studied and the teachers we interviewed surrounded efforts to welcome and serve the full range of children attending the school. The structures in place to support diverse learners and, in particular, those students with identified disabilities were designed with Bank Street’s approach to special education, which begins with

the premise that all children have the same needs: joy and excitement in learning, rich curricula, opportunities for individual and cooperative learning, and a supportive school environment. Teachers in all classrooms benefit from a deeper understanding of how to identify learning differences and how to present lessons in ways that allow all children access to understanding what is being taught. (Bank Street College of Education, 2014f)

By way of example, approximately 20% of the students at Community Roots have an identified disability, all of whom are served by the school’s integrated inclusion model. At Brooklyn New School approximately 24% of its students have an identified disability and are served by the same model. The fundamental structures of these schools have been designed to enable teachers to support a range of learners inside the regular classroom. The schools utilize an integrated co-teaching (ICT) model, in which every classroom is staffed with both a general education and special education certified teacher. In addition, teachers work collaboratively with a Learning Support Team that is staffed by other special educators and learning specialists. The commitment to inclusion is a defining characteristic of Community Roots:

At Community Roots, inclusive education is not simply about special education, but about creating an environment where there is a deeply connected community that celebrates the diversity of our students’ learning strengths and needs. We instill the concept of inclusion into every aspect of our mission, community and curriculum. In addition, we are committed to developing creative programming for students with special educational needs. The criteria for our successful inclusive environment are embedded throughout the school’s charter, professional development plan, program implementation and community outreach. All staff members are held accountable for taking part in professional development that supports teachers in working to adapt the school’s curriculum to meet students’ individual needs. At Community Roots, all staff members are responsible for creating a

school environment in which all children feel welcome and thrive both academically and socially. (Community Roots Charter School, 2014)

The structure of the co-teaching model—one general education teacher and one special education teacher in each classroom—contributes to a flexibility around grouping and support within classrooms. For example, in one math lesson we observed the special education teacher take a group of eight students onto the rug for a mini-lesson on word problems. The other teacher worked the room providing support for and conversing with the other students who worked either independently or in pairs. As the students on the rug transitioned to more independent work, the special education teacher began to move through the classroom working with the full range of students in the class to support their specific needs, “How are you doing on this problem?” “Can you explain your thinking here?” The high frequency of exchange between teacher and student in classrooms corresponds to the fundamental principles of attending both to the whole child as a learner and to each learner as an individual.

Principal Keil describes the model of co-teaching between teachers as a central element of Community Roots and one of its defining features:

Co-teaching is essential, and that really stands out to parents who are looking at lots of public schools, even—and private schools. It’s not a head teaching and an assistant model; it’s not a mentor–mentee. It’s the full co-teaching, sharing of these 25 kids and 25 families.

Inside the classroom, the emphasis on project-based teaching and the focused sensitivity of teachers to the unique developmental profile and trajectory of each student dovetails with the principle of inclusion. As Shapiro and Nager (2000) describe, in the developmental-interaction approach, “The teacher was expected to be attuned to what the child brought to the classroom—the social and intellectual talents and abilities, the gaps, the inconsistencies, fears, and joys—and to construct a curriculum that reflected both decisions about content and what children brought to that content” (p. 22).

Aside from the organizing structure of the integrated co-teaching model, Community Roots has developed a range of resources that the school deploys to support the range of children in their classrooms. This has been a work in progress as Principal Stone reports:

We have all related services provided here, from occupational therapy to speech therapy, and then we meet. We try to put the same amount of effort in—as we can—to our support staff as we do our classroom teaching staff, so we have regular support-provider meetings, because I think it’s important that they have a community too. And a lot of

those kids have overlap services, and it's a really good opportunity for us to be able to talk about children.

...There's other structures that we put in place, such as a child study team. And that's been a huge learning experience for us over the years—trying to make that work. We believed in this idea of coming together to talk about children, and that we have enough expertise on staff that we can essentially figure out solutions to working with children. But over the years, it's been a really hard sort of dynamic to make work. And this year [2013] I think we've finally gotten to a place that feels really good. It's a committee that has stayed together, representative of different related services, and then also different grade levels; whereas before, it used to change depending on where the student was coming from. And now that group is solid, and I think has essentially come up with their own identity, and that's really helped service our kids.

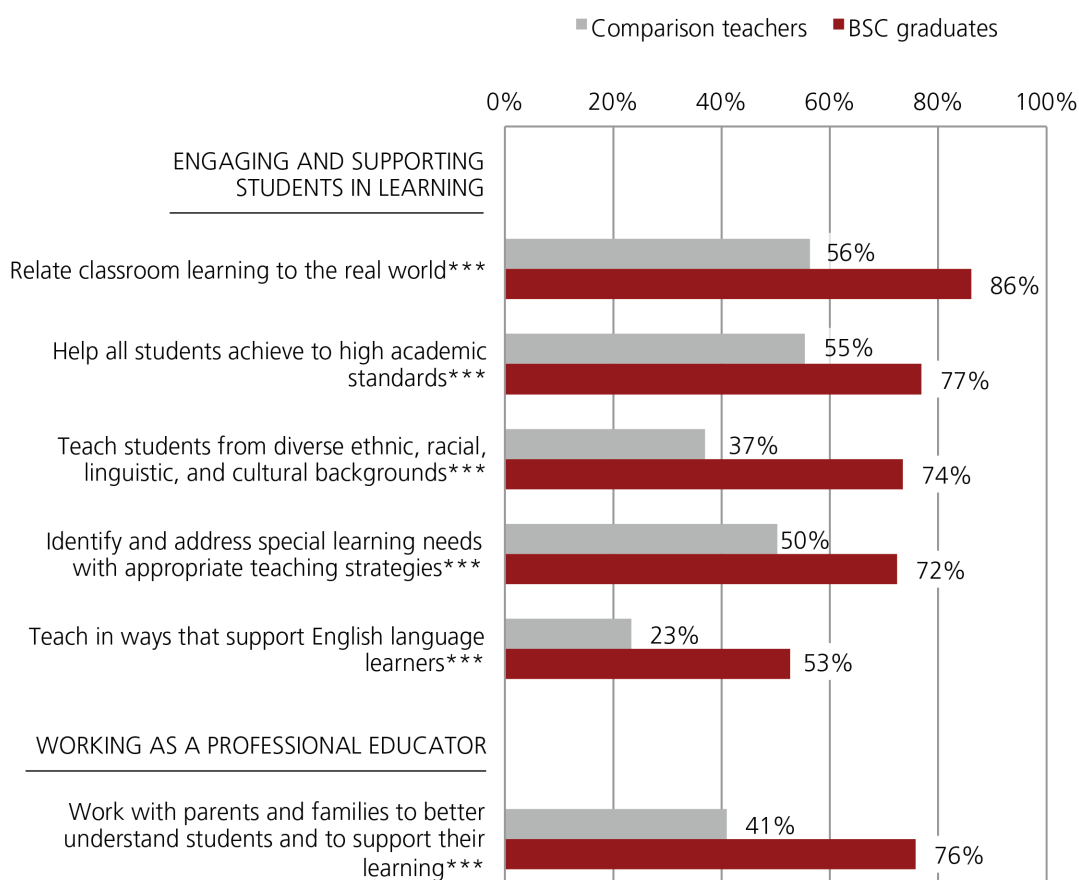
The ICT model is a clear instantiation of Community Roots' commitment to the inclusion and success of a very wide range of students. While ICT is not unique to Community Roots, it is taken up with vigor in this place and expressed in words and practice with deep conviction. The inclusive approach serves as a central facet of the orientation of the work of the school and its teachers. This inclusive orientation was mirrored across the schools and classrooms of Bank Street graduates in our studies.

This orientation toward community and inclusivity is fostered in numerous ways in the graduate programs at Bank Street. To begin with, it is a challenge to find a course in the Bank Street curriculum that does not teach to community, diversity, or inclusion in some form; the values are so central to the college's mission that they are infused throughout all of its programs. Many of the college's course offerings focus directly on diversity and inclusion, such as Social Studies as the Core of the Integrated Curriculum for Children with Special Needs; Curriculum in Early Childhood Education: Developing Learning Environments and Experiences for Children of Diverse Backgrounds and Abilities; The Study of Children in Diverse and Inclusive Educational Settings through Observation and Recording; and Mathematics for Teachers in Diverse and Inclusive Educational Settings. The offerings also include an extensive catalog of courses in special education, learning differences, and dual-language learning, preparing graduates for diversity in learning styles as well as socioeconomic diversity in school communities. Throughout the coursework and the fieldwork, Bank Street students are continuously exposed to the ethos of Mitchell's civic-minded vision for education.

The commitment of Bank Street graduates to the school's mission shines clearly in the results of our survey of graduates and their employers. Graduates describe a readiness to teach students from diverse backgrounds and to address special learning

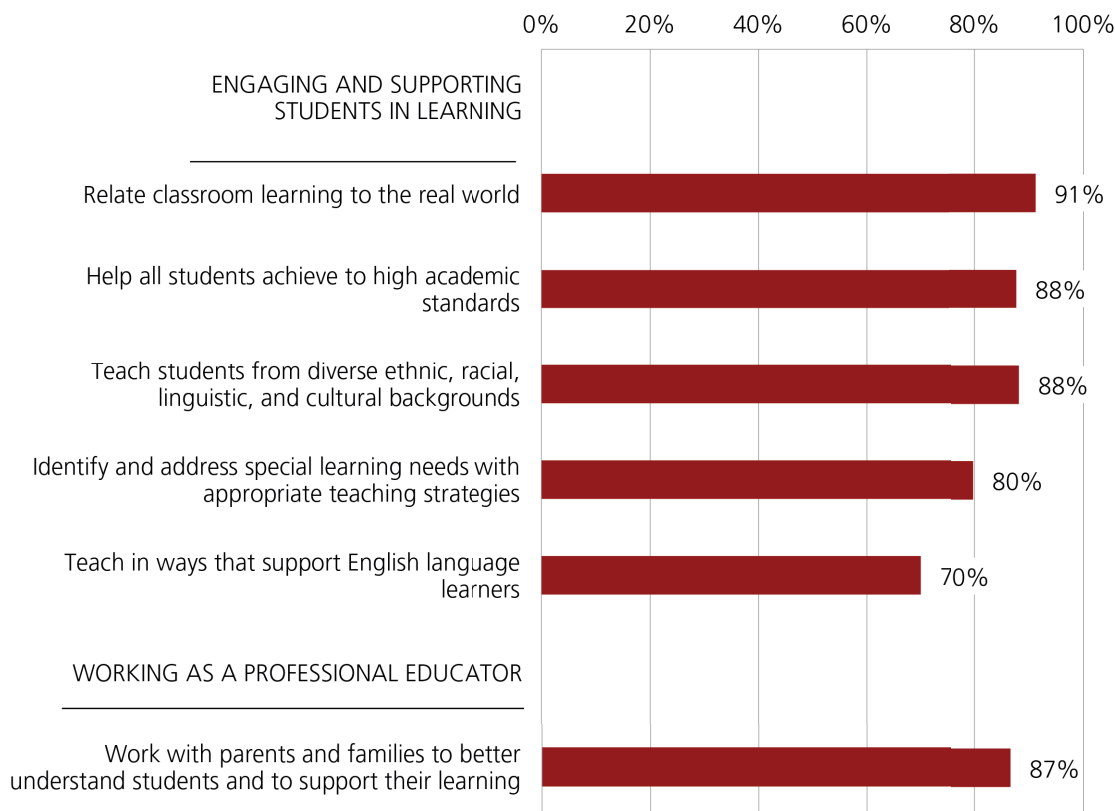
needs. Of the graduates responding to the Teaching Programs Survey, 74% report feeling well or very well prepared to teach students from diverse backgrounds, while only 37% of respondents to the Comparison Teacher Survey convey a similar level of comfort. We also saw a disparity between Bank Street graduates and comparison teachers when asked about relating learning to the real world and working with families to address a child's individual learning needs. Surveyed employers enthusiastically corroborated these findings, saying Bank Street graduates are well prepared to relate learning to the real world, teach diverse populations, and work with families to address the individual learning needs of students. (See Figure 20 and Figure 21.) Street graduates value community, diversity, and inclusion, and they integrate those values throughout their teaching practice. In fact, they actively pursue environments and placements in which they can further Bank Street's mission.

Figure 20. Percentages of Bank Street Graduates and Comparison Teachers Who Responded "Well" or "Very Well" to Survey Question: *How well did your teacher preparation program prepare you to do each of the following as a teacher?*



Note. Significance of comparison of item means of Bank Street College graduates versus comparison teachers indicated next to item: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Figure 21. Percentages of Employers Who Responded “Well” or “Very Well” to Survey Question: *Compared to other teachers with whom you have worked, how well prepared are Bank Street College graduates to do each of the following as a teacher?*



As noted by several Bank Street alumni via the Teaching Programs Survey, the ethos of diversity and inclusion, and the modeling of those values in their teaching program, had a meaningful impact on their preparation experiences and current teaching practices:

- I am well prepared to address the needs of a diverse population with varied teaching strategies that address varied learning styles. I must say that I was intimidated by how “perfect” a good classroom teacher needed to be to be successful, and overwhelmed by the vast/hungry needs of students, particularly those with difficult family backgrounds. What I learned at Bank Street made me worry I wouldn’t be good enough to serve everyone every day in a classroom at my age (then 49).
- Bank Street prepared me well to question all assumptions in curricula and education norms, helped me respect all students and families—a practice that serves me in my 100% poverty/diversity school.

- I attended Bank Street while teaching in my Teach for America placement school in East New York, Brooklyn, and I truly believe that I would not have made it through my first year of teaching without the amazing support from my Bank Street advisors and professors. Bank Street's commitment to preparing teachers to provide a high quality education to a diverse urban population is evident. Although I have now returned to my home state of Maine, where I teach a significantly less racially and ethnically diverse population, I believe that my Bank Street education, combined with my three years of experience in the NYC public schools, have made me a much more reflective, thoughtful teacher than I would otherwise be.

Teacher Professionalism and Collaboration

A commitment to the development of professional educators who demonstrate the capacity to collaborate productively with colleagues is described in Bank Street's conceptual framework for its national accreditation as an explicit goal: "[I]t is through collaboration that we often find our best selves and our best work" (Bank Street College of Education, 2012, p. 18). The capacity to engage in professional dialogue and discourse combined with ongoing habits of inquiry and reflection are also enduring aspirations for the program.

What emerged from the survey data and our time at the case study schools was a consistent portrait of teachers involved in an ongoing, professional conversation about the practice of teaching and learning, community-building, and societal progress. As Johanna, one of the teachers from Midtown West, said about her work, "What I like best about working here is that it seems that we're engaged in this unfolding, never-ending conversation about teaching and learning. The conversations keep on going, and we keep on learning. It never ends, and you always feel as if you're growing."

An Ongoing Conversation: The Bank Street Ethos in Action. As described by Johanna above, Bank Street teachers depict a spirit of professionalism, collaboration, and collegial interaction at all three of the Bank Street-affiliated schools we studied. They describe how working at these schools means participating in an ongoing conversation about practice that involves thinking together about children and their families, planning courses of study, revising lessons and units, planning around school schedules and needs, and generally committing to an ethic of practice that entails inquiry, reflection, ongoing revision, and hard work around school and instructional practices.

The sense of collegiality at these schools does not exist simply because the faculty gets along well, though many do report that teachers at these schools are friends as well as colleagues. A common trend we observed at these Bank Street-affiliated

schools was that teachers come together over a common desire to continually better themselves, their work, and their impact on students, families, and their community. Collaborating and regularly communicating with each other, even through debate, is seen as essential for this refinement of practice to occur.

Beth and Johanna regard the notion that teachers should be engaged, reflective, learning professionals who work collegially and are constantly learning together as emanating from the school's close connections to Bank Street. "I think that one of the elements that I identify with as 'Bank Street' is the importance of always reflecting and being engaged in ongoing discussion with your colleagues," says Johanna. She explains that a faculty member from Bank Street helps facilitate this close collaboration across and within grade levels. With the support of the Bank Street faculty member, "The teachers come together to talk about kids, and talk about good practice."

Beth and Johanna explain that teachers also frequently observe each other in one another's classrooms, so everyone knows what is going on throughout the school. The idea is that if someone asks a teacher to teach a different grade level for a day, "You'd be able to do it without missing a beat."

The leadership ensures that there are structures in place to allow for teachers to regularly meet and plan together. According to Midtown West principal Ryan Bourke, because the school budgets for full- and part-time specialty teachers (including art, music, science, and gym teachers), grade-level teachers each have two or three prep periods a day

where they can come together with their grade colleague and plan, where they can come together in a loop and take a look at student work, participate in inquiry and have these instructional conversations, or participate in PD [professional development]. So that again is the culture of the school that...we are able to free up teachers regularly and once a week for loop meetings, at least once a week for creative meetings, so that that PD can occur.

An orientation toward and commitment to teacher collaboration, professional growth, and community connections was in evidence at all of the schools in our field studies. As demonstrated in the sample weekly schedule (see Table 3), the Community Roots administration and faculty work collectively to organize time throughout the week so that key school priorities can be supported, including significant time for faculty collaboration and professional growth, as well as opportunities for student enrichment and family engagement.

Table 3. Sample Weekly Schedule: Community Roots

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Weekend
8:15 a.m.	Morning meeting Community building activity Read aloud/ word study	Morning meeting Intergrade buddy read once per month	Morning meeting Community building activity Read aloud/ word study	Family sing in music room Morning meeting Community building activity	All-school meeting and community sing Morning meeting Community building activity	PALS (playing and learning squads): Organized by families in partnership with teachers, different families opt to host a play date for a small group of students.
9:10 a.m.	Academic block	Academic block	Academic block	Academic block	Academic block	
10:05 a.m.	Academic block	Academic block	Science	Academic block	Academic block	
11:00 a.m.	Lunch Grade 5 Community Builders meeting Faculty planning and/or meetings	Lunch Faculty planning and/or meetings	Lunch Faculty planning and/or meetings	Lunch Faculty planning and/or meetings	Lunch Staff community lunch	Three Stars Gardening: All three schools colocated in the building bring in volunteers to work together on the garden.
11:55 a.m.	Art	Academic block	Academic block	Academic block	Gym	
12:55 p.m.	Academic block	Academic block	Academic block	Capoeira or African dance	Academic block	
1:50 p.m.	Academic block	Music	Academic block	Academic block	Academic block	
2:45 p.m.	Academic block	Academic block	Community building activity	Art Grade-level team meeting with coprincipals	Science	
3:35 p.m.	Dismissal: Some students stay for after-school extra help or Learning Through Service & Action (a grade 4–5 service group). Monday 4–6 p.m. faculty professional development. Faculty planning or grade-level meetings with learning specialist on other days.					
Evening	Evening activities include Family Music Night; Parents and Children Together with Art (PACT), run by Free Arts NYC; Community Open Opportunity Kitchen School (COOKS); and Family Sports Night.					

Note. In any given week, part or all of a school day can be taken up by field trips.

Black text: In-classroom academic activities. During academic blocks, students might engage in integrated studies, writing, math, reading, or open work.

Red text: Specials. Teachers often use specials periods to prepare for academic blocks and/or to have meetings (e.g., planning, student study team, or IEP meetings; or meetings with parents).

Green text: Faculty-specific activities.

Purple text: School activities that include parents and families.

The team teaching structures at all three of our case study schools—Midtown West’s approach to looping and the integrated co-teaching (ICT) model in use at Community Roots and Brooklyn New School—were all particularly conducive for fostering collaboration among teachers. Moreover, at all three, school leadership and school structures and systems supported team teaching efforts.

By placing both a general education and special education teacher in each classroom, the ICT model enables the school to strive towards inclusion and provides the teachers with opportunities to collaboratively structure learning in the classroom in ways that enhance the capacity of teachers to meet with students, individualize learning, and engage in an approach to learning grounded in high levels of interaction. In addition, teachers work collaboratively with a Learning Support Team that is staffed by other special educators and learning specialists.

In the looping model, all teachers from kindergarten through grade five at Midtown West are part of a 2-year looping team: K–1, 2–3, and 4–5. The kindergarten teachers will move up with their students to first grade next year, while the current first grade teachers move down to kindergarten with a fresh group of children. Thus, there are four teachers with shared responsibilities for curriculum across two grades. This is the model for all of the looping teams. K–1 loop teacher Denise explains:

Because we loop, too, I think that you rely on the other half of the loop to give you some feedback in terms of how it worked for them this year. So we’re kindergarten now, they’re first grade...So if we have questions about things that they did this year, that’s a collaboration piece.

Years ago, the teachers themselves pushed to have weekly loop meetings, as they saw tremendous value in this type of collaboration. According to Johanna, Midtown West teachers have historically come together as an intentional professional community to have conversations with their principals about the types of structures they needed in order to better collaborate with each other and meet the needs of their children:

Well, one of the first things that was really important for us, and we started this years ago, [was] that we would have loop meetings to provide teachers an opportunity to meet, not only with their grade level, but with their loop, and that’s been really important to us. And teachers were instrumental in coming together to form a schedule to make sure that happens....And teachers said things like we wanna have loop meetings, we wanna have half classes because we struggle with sometimes having 28–30 kids in the room. Are there opportunities that we can meet with half of the classes? And we’ve got principals who are wonderful about that. Some of them brought that to the table and others we had to go, well you know, we’ve done half-classes. How can we make this work?

This view of teachers as a community of practitioners harkens back to the early days of Bank Street College. The founders of Bank Street designed their program and curricula to intentionally build a learning community among their prospective teachers. Grinberg (2005) explains that the learning community in the Bank Street case “encompasses learning in community, which includes a constructivist view of learning with and from one another, building and relying on each other, intellectual challenges, and collaboration and growth” (p. 77). The prospective teachers’ opportunities to learn were contingent on the depth of their community with one another, as it was through communal interactions that they learned to push each other and co-construct their knowledge of teaching.

The teachers at each of our three case study school sites have formed a professional learning community similar to the model that Bank Street’s founders and current faculty envision for their prospective teachers. We observed communities of collaborative and reflective teacher–learners passionately committed to the teaching profession. As Trevor, a Midtown West teacher, notes:

And we’re all willing to teach each other. We’re willing to go into each other’s classes. We’re willing to [go to] staff development on Thursday mornings. Our school, every single Monday has voluntary professional development for an hour to two hours. Even three hours at times.... that level of respect is amazing.

Teachers in our case study schools spend surprisingly long hours at the school each day. For example, at Midtown West, several faculty members comment that few teachers leave the building when daily instruction ends. Early in the morning, 30 minutes to an hour before the school day officially begins, many teachers are already preparing in their classrooms or are meeting with students to provide additional academic support. A couple of Midtown West grade-level teams joke that they see each other more than they see their life partners, and several teachers describe themselves as “living at the school.”

These characteristics of the faculty and professional community at our case study schools are not happenstance. Rather, the character and composition of the faculty have been carefully curated and strategically shaped over the years. At each of the schools, we noted a commitment to hiring a diverse, committed, hardworking, and collegial faculty whose perspectives resonated with the stated mission of the school and elements of the developmental-interaction approach. While faculty turnover is low, new hires are selected with significant input from current faculty and parents along with school administrative leaders. New teachers are often selected from the ranks of student teachers who have demonstrated a “rightness of fit” in the course of the student-teaching experience.

Midtown West teacher Vanessa describes this level of commitment to their teaching

practice—both as individuals and as a shared community of educators—as “professionalism at the highest.” In her view, teachers are taken seriously as autonomous, intellectual professionals:

You’re held accountable for really knowing your stuff and really saying that this is the reason why I’m doing these things.... You never have to go to somebody and say, “Can you do this for me?” It’s more of you [as a staff] hav[ing] to take initiative by yourself and also do[ing] all these things. You’re a professional. We’re treated as professionals to make a lot of...choices ourselves and do all the planning ourselves and do a lot ourselves. We do the scheduling. We do everything. We ran [the school] for two months without a principal. We’re fine. We’re self-motivators.

Such collegiality does not mean that teachers always agree on what the best course of action is for their students. Tensions occasionally flare in these ongoing conversations about best practice, various courses of action, or even long-held traditions, but these are generally viewed as useful and productive tensions, as Midtown West teacher Amanda explains:

I love when things [get] heated, and we’re really questioning each other and pushing each other to defend our motives or [asking,] “Why is it that something has to stay this way just because it’s always been this way? What is the true reason that we do this?” And then we walk out from there and everything’s fine because the whole idea is that we have to have those kinds of conversations in order to move forward and, you know, have a solid foundation as opposed to being fractured. And we’re not scared to get into those difficult moments.

What matters is not a uniform vision of practice, but rather a sense of shared purpose and collegial respect. The professional community we observed fits a professional ethos described by Bank Street faculty member Frank Pignatelli: “A mix of personal, professional affinities and dispositions are at work here, a commonly held set of values, an abiding shared vision of what needs fixing and repair in schools” (2011, p. 220–221). Based on this model, teachers are highly accountable to each other as they work together with collegiality in order to continually improve their collective practice. At the core of this collaborative professional spirit is a sense of moral accountability. Pignatelli (2011) says that when teachers are morally accountable to each other, they develop collegiality that involves “mutuality, reciprocity, attentive listening, mindful watching, and...selflessness. One roots for another’s success, puts oneself to the side as it were, in the interests of supporting a colleagues growth” (p. 218). Their goal is to share everything openly, to push each other fervently, and ultimately to make tough decisions as a team in the best interest of children.

This orientation to the professional work of teachers was a common theme across the Bank Street-affiliated schools in our study. As Midtown West principal Ryan explains:

I also feel that within this staff themselves, they are very cohesive, where there are tons and tons of collaboration. The staff are very close to each other, and that can be sensed in any staff meeting or any grade meeting, unit meeting. There's this unifying sense of the school, and I feel that does come from Bank Street, to a large part.

Enacting Professionalism: From Preparation to Practice. When describing their approach to the teaching profession, Bank Street graduates regularly come back to the ways in which Bank Street helped them become active learners, reflective educators, and strong collaborators, all of which informs their current teaching practices and connections to the profession. As one graduate explains, “Bank Street was 2 years of self-examination that led to my understanding of myself as a learner to make me a better teacher and education professional.”

Graduates also speak powerfully about the collegiality they felt while in the program, both with their instructors and peers, and the impact of those experiences:

- I truly loved my time at Bank Street. The coursework, depth and length of the student teaching placements (I had three excellent placements totaling a full year), and the advisory were all rich experiences that I continue to draw on. I loved the intense support of my advisor and the collegiality of both my advisory group and my classmates during coursework. As I have gone on to teach in different states, countries, and in a variety of different schools, it has become clear to me how well Bank Street prepared me for my professional life and what a stand-out it is in the world of teacher preparation programs (which is why I chose it from the get-go). So few of my colleagues report experiencing anything close to it in their teacher preparation programs. I am incredibly grateful to Bank Street for helping shape my educational philosophy and encourage my reflectiveness and creativity.
- Bank Street is unique in teacher preparation programs for the integrity of the practice of its own philosophy: that is, experience-based learning is lifelong learning, and reflection with peers and guides/mentors is key in personal development as a teacher. Wherever I have taught, it is the Bank Street graduates who were my colleagues that were the best team players, most interested in participating in collaborative projects, and most thoughtful about child development and individual learning. I cannot say enough about the value of a Bank Street education.

Many graduates describe missing the close-knit collaboration they experienced at Bank Street, particularly in their advisory or “conference group.” As one graduate noted, “I wish there was some sort of continual conference group-type thing or alumni gatherings to transition out of Bank Street. I miss collaborating with instructors and my colleagues there.” Others express ways they have maintained connections and continued to collaborate with peers and advisors from the program:

I was blessed and fortunate to attend Bank Street College (my first choice) for grad school. I have yet to regret that decision. After numerous years, I still implement and have built upon the rich experiences in the quality of teaching, collaboration from fellow students who attended with me, whom I am still friends with, [and] great support and invaluable advice from my advisor, [who] is still there with support if needed.

Survey results further underscore the quality of preparation of Bank Street graduates in the realm of teacher professionalism: 83% of Bank Street graduates report that they feel comfortable collaborating with peers, while just 55% of their counterparts from other teacher preparation programs feel the same. Graduates of Bank Street also report a similar level of comfort evaluating the effects of their actions and modifying plans, as well as working with parents to better understand students and their learning. Bank Street graduates are collaborative and self-reflective, and they are likely to assume leadership roles in schools. (See Figure 22 and Figure 23, pp. 144–145.)

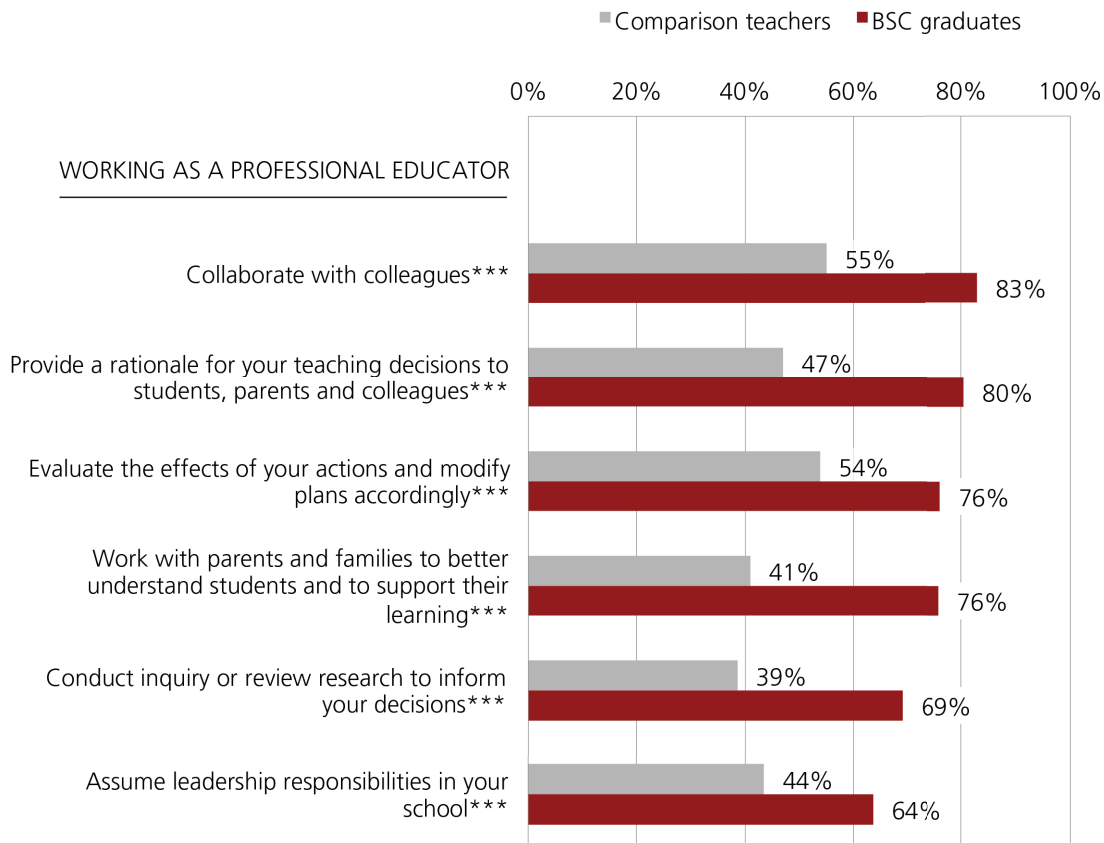
As mentioned previously, according to our survey results, Bank Street graduates and employers are highly satisfied with the preparation provided by Bank Street College, and Bank Street graduates stay in teaching at high rates. Bank Street graduates are also professionally active. In contrast to the comparison sample, Bank Street graduates are significantly more likely to attend professional conferences, plan or conduct professional development, participate in school reform or improvement committees, and help start or lead new schools or programs.

In Nager and Shapiro’s occasional paper, “A Progressive Approach to the Education of Teachers: Some Principles from the Bank Street College of Education” (2007) they identify the ongoing development of personal and professional identity as a core principle of the Bank Street approach from its beginning as The Bureau of Educational Experiments. They define this principle—that “the teacher continues to grow as a person and as a professional”—as:

True to a central tenet of progressive thinking that education must address the “whole child,” the teacher is regarded as a whole person, achieving an integration of personal and professional identity. The Bureau’s goals for teachers were far reaching. The aim of the teacher

education program was to provide a rich array of opportunities and an atmosphere that promoted discussion, reflection, and personal as well as intellectual growth. In this sense, the curriculum for teachers was designed as an analog to that for children. (p. 25)

Figure 22. Percentages of Bank Street Graduates and Comparison Teachers Who Responded “Well” or “Very Well” to Survey Question: *How well did your teacher preparation program prepare you to do each of the following as a teacher?*



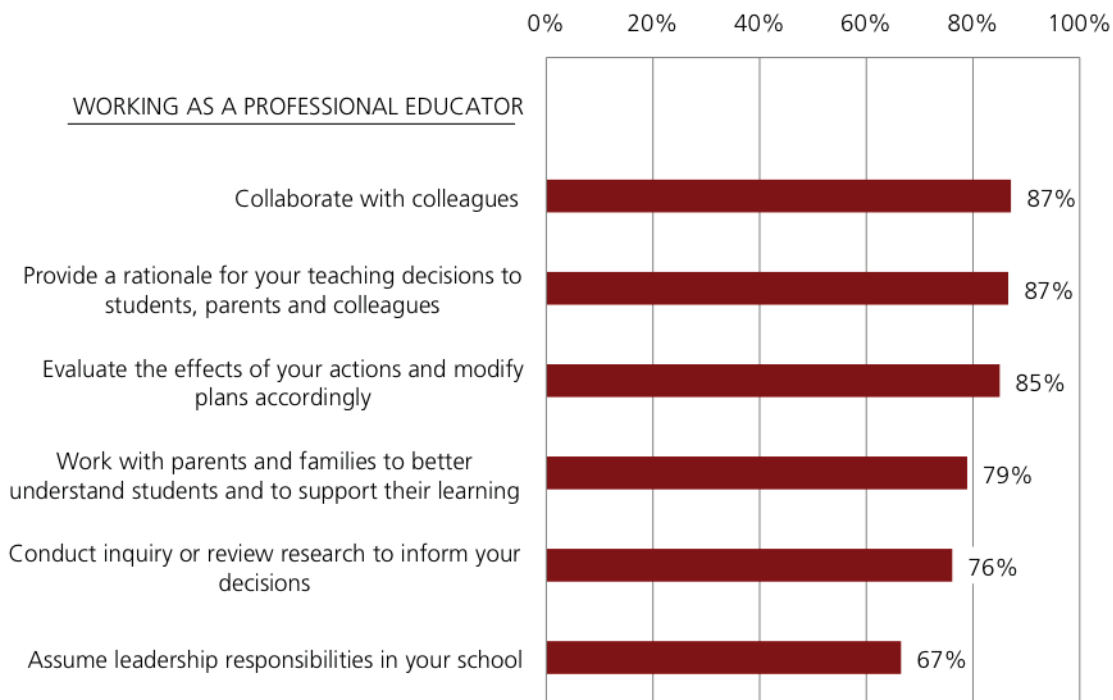
Note. Significance of comparison of item means of Bank Street College graduates versus comparison teachers indicated next to item: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

The ongoing formation of a teacher’s identity involves intensive socialization experiences that occur within the ecology of a teacher’s school life. Nager and Shapiro write, “Learning and growth must occur in the context of relationships and community—with faculty mentors, peers, school personnel, children, and families; the process of becoming a teacher can only occur in a social context” (p. 28).

The graduates of Bank Street describe teaching as a lifelong process of growing as a professional. As one teacher described when asked about how she experienced her professional culture:

[W]e always tell our students that we're all teachers and we're all students and we all continue to learn, and that takes the pressure off of having to be perfect or having to do things a certain way or be embarrassed. And one other thing when you said that that immediately came to my mind is the willingness to work hard. Or sit with someone and just debrief or give someone feedback. Just that collaboration. It's not like, "I have no time for you" or that kind of thing.

Figure 23. Percentages of Bank Street Graduates and Comparison Teachers Who Responded “Well” or “Very Well” to Survey Question: *How well did your teacher preparation program prepare you to do each of the following as a teacher?*



Another teacher in responding to the survey observed, “My experience with Bank Street College graduates spans several schools. In each case, these teachers seem to love teaching, understand how different people learn, and value/model effective collaboration skills.” The nature of the social connections among adults and the modes of professional collaboration that teachers described shape the fundamental nature of how Bank Street-educated teachers grow, develop, and evolve. These forms of interaction also impact the nature of the institutions and schools that we studied in important ways.

Teaching to Serve the Public Good

In 1931, Mitchell wrote that if teachers were to impact society then they needed preparation that immersed them in the types of experiences that would enable children to understand the interplay between the classroom and the community. They must study and reflect on their own experiences and encounters with community. Grinberg (2005) notes that while it is important for teachers to understand and enjoy children, a critical element of preparation requires teachers to know “the world in which children live and understand the social, political, and economic contexts which condition the environment in which children grow and develop” (p. 8). This engagement with community was a first principle to Mitchell, who wrote:

To promote the development of personal powers, we propose to treat the student-teachers as we should treat children—only on a higher age level. We propose to give them a program of “experiences” in exploring their local environment which will sensitise them to this environment, quicken their powers of observation, enlarge their “intake” by making more active their senses and their motor life. The study of the environment, as we plan it, will be based upon fieldwork. We hope our students will explore, not only the geographic world in which they live, but also the cultural and social-economic world. (as cited in Grinberg, 2005, p. 9)

Cultivating this capacity to understand the project of teaching within community is a particular strength of Bank Street’s preparation program: 86% of graduates highlight that they have learned to “relate classroom learning to the real world” in comparison to only 56% of teachers from the comparison group. In addition, 91% of employers responded that Bank Street graduates did “very well” or “well” “relating classroom learning to the real world.” This blend of theory, practice, and experience remains core to preparation at Bank Street.

As one graduate explained in her survey:

I stand up for my students when I don’t agree [with something that affects them] because of the social justice I learned from Bank Street. My rich learning experiences in teacher development, diversity, numerous perspectives from varied peoples, literature...[have] allowed me to build parents’ trust and support, which is so important. I still refer to [Bank Street] texts, professors, and other alumni to grow and learn as a teacher.

By way of example, the inception of Community Roots Charter School can be mapped directly back to Bank Street College. The initial conception and design of the school began as a class project undertaken by Community Roots’ founding coprincipals, Keil and Stone, while they were taking a graduate course on designing small schools taught by Frank Pignatelli in one of the educational leadership pro-

grams at Bank Street College. Keil and Stone worked together on developing a plan and proposal to design a diverse, public school that would be inspired by and guided by an ethos of progressive, student-centered teaching and learning—long rooted in the Bank Street approach. This vision would counter the trend in urban school reform to create urban public schools grounded in the “no excuses” ideology that prioritizes modes of learning and community emphasizing discipline and regimentation. As Keil put it:

[T]he charter school movement right now believes that charter schools are for predominantly poor children from minority families, and that those types of children learn in a militant, back-to-basics, no-excuses model. And we were here to say, from both of our teaching experiences, that’s not true. We both taught in caring classrooms that were social studies focused, with children from all different backgrounds. And that children learning together was going to be the most important thing in terms of being successful in our world right now....And so that was our belief....

And then it was saying that every single child can learn in this setting, can learn in a setting where teachers care for and love their kids, that feels familial, where families are welcomed in the classroom, and where children are learning to be researchers. That’s how we frame that sort of Bank Street approach....we’re gonna teach children to be researchers, starting in kindergarten. And we do that through really engaging, project-based social studies work. And there was not—there isn’t a great belief, at least in New York, that that type of education is for everyone.

The initial vision of founding a school grounded in principles of striving to serve the public good occurred while Keil and Stone were doing the work for a course project. Their conversations unfolded over time and ultimately led to the establishment of Community Roots Charter School. This example of a real-world public school evolving from a class project demonstrates how the Bank Street approach flows out into the world through its graduates, who are guided by a central principle of Bank Street—“education must be a vehicle for social justice, a route to a more equitable and participatory democracy” (Nager & Shapiro, 2007, p. 10).

At the Bank Street–affiliated schools we studied, teachers, parents, and administrators described their school’s commitment to serving a full range of students and families as a form of political and social activism that serves the public good. As one Brooklyn New School teacher said:

It’s a very diverse place, and I think that’s very exciting. I feel like there are all different kinds of learners here. Kids from all different kinds of

backgrounds. And I think that there's a richness to that. That it's just not easily replicated, even in a book. I think it is a very special place.

Another BNS teacher described how the school's commitment to being a representation of the community drew her there:

It appealed to me because it's a school that really cares about having a racially, ethnically, economically diverse student body—it's something that is a value in the school. So that was really important to me.

As another teacher said about the vision for BNS, "The one thing that the principal said to me when I was a teaching artist, she said she wanted the same thing for the students here that she had provided for her own daughters." This commitment to the public good animates the work of the Bank Street educators we met in our study.

Approach to the World: Conclusion

The vision of education as a force for social change remains alive and thriving in the classrooms and schools of Bank Street graduates. We describe this Bank Street approach to the world through four themes:

- Connecting with families and the community,
- Commitment to diversity and inclusion,
- Seeing teaching as a collaborative, learning profession, and
- Teaching to serve the public good.

Connecting with families and the community. Mitchell believed that children learn to know the world through the study of community, starting with the self, family, home, school, and neighborhood, and slowly expanding outward in scope and vision to the larger community and world. All the schools we studied had thriving programs and systems designed to welcome and integrate the students' families into the school community and to involve the students directly with the local community. For example, all the case study schools include Family and Neighborhood integrated studies in their curriculum. Exploring the local environment propels children toward developing a progressive consciousness and a capacity for democratic living, according to Mitchell. She believed that for that to happen the preparation of teachers had to aim beyond the simple improvement of the quality of a child's education.

Commitment to diversity and inclusion: The teachers we interviewed and surveyed espoused a strong commitment to serving a broad and diverse range of students. In addition, the case study schools have structures in place to support diverse learners and, in particular, those students with identified disabilities. These

approaches were developed to meet Bank Street's approach to special education, based on the "premise that all children have the same needs: joy and excitement in learning, rich curricula, opportunities for individual and cooperative learning, and a supportive school environment" (Bank Street College of Education, 2014f).

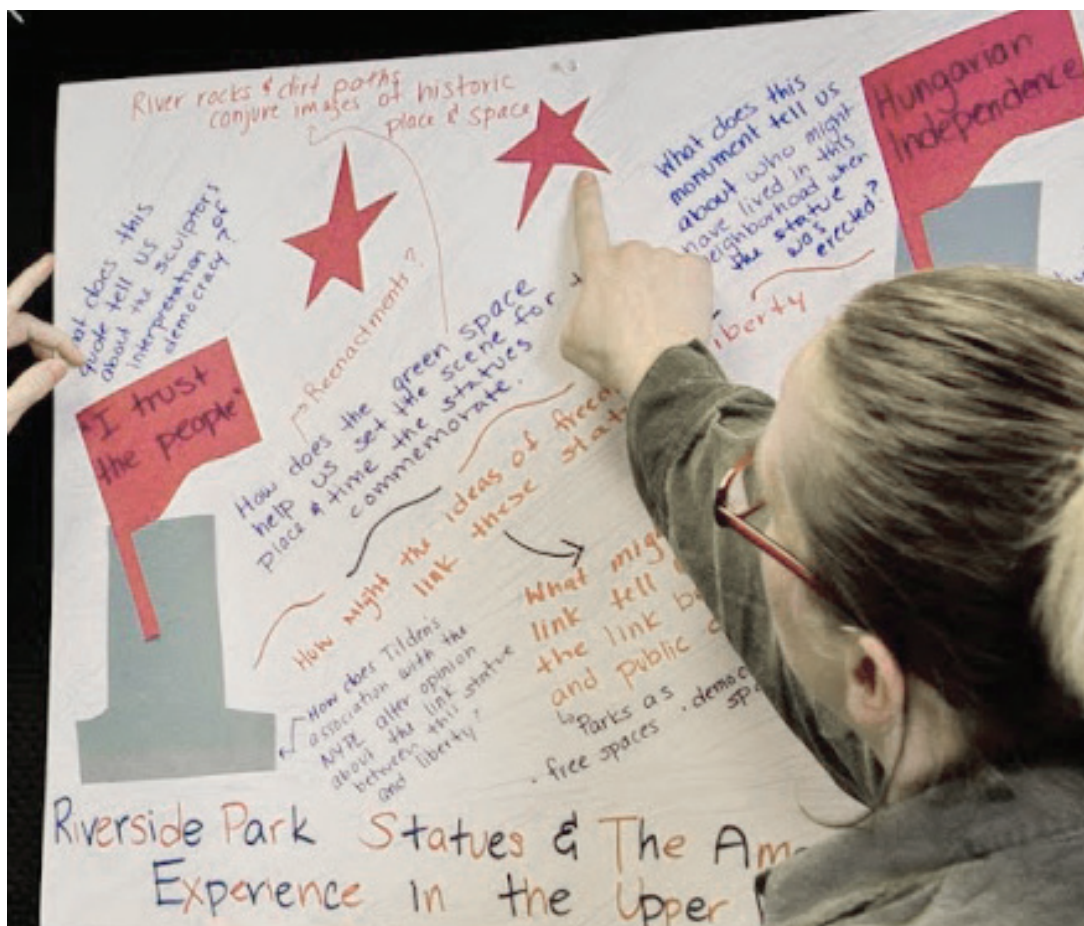
The Bank Street approach to the world entails advancing the central mission of preparing inclusive teachers who embrace diversity. This prevailing ethos is infused throughout the structure, practices, and values of the program. Many of the program's course offerings focus directly on diversity and inclusion, such as Social Studies as the Core of the Integrated Curriculum for Children with Special Needs or Mathematics for Teachers in Diverse and Inclusive Educational Settings (Bank Street College of Education, 2014b).

In addition, the commitment of Bank Street graduates to an inclusive education shone clearly in our survey of graduates and their employers. Graduates describe a comfort and readiness to address special learning needs and to teach students from diverse backgrounds. Over 85% of graduates surveyed reported feeling comfortable teaching a diversity of students, while only 36% of respondents from other teacher education programs conveyed a similar comfort. We saw a similar disparity between Bank Street graduates and their peers when asked about relating learning to the real world and working with families to address a child's individual learning needs. Employers enthusiastically corroborated these findings: over 90% of employers surveyed report that Bank Street graduates relate learning to the real world.

Teacher professionalism and collaboration. The Bank Street graduates we surveyed, interviewed, and observed see the work of teachers as being professionally oriented, collaborative and collegial, and learning- and inquiry-focused. Across our studies, Bank Street alumni characterized their preparation and current practices with this particular orientation to teaching as a profession. Schools were structured in ways that fostered such collegiality, as teachers were given significant amounts of time to plan together and engage in ongoing professional development. Further, Bank Street graduates report being well prepared to work with colleagues, families, and students in a collaborative, respectful, and inquiry-based manner.

Teaching to serve the public good. The Bank Street approach includes a conscious and deliberate effort to practice teaching in ways that align with the idea that education serves as a vehicle to advance social justice, equity, and participatory democracy. In interviews with teachers and administrators and through survey responses, we often heard that the essence of the Bank Street approach was conceived of as a form of political and social activism that serves the public good. In this way, Bank Street graduates adhere to Mitchell's original vision for the college to foster teachers who are mindful of their communities' cultures and socioeconomic conditions. Further, Bank Street graduates express a commitment to instilling similar values of social awareness and potential activism in their own students.

Summary. In Nager and Shapiro's concept paper, "A Progressive Approach to the Education of Teachers: Some Principles from Bank Street College Of Education" (2007), the first principle speaks to Bank Street's long-standing approach to the world: "Education is a vehicle for creating and promoting social justice and encouraging participation in democratic processes" (p. 9). These values are woven throughout the Bank Street teacher preparation curriculum, and we found an extensive commitment from graduates to this ethos throughout the study. The Bank Street approach to the world involves a commitment to social justice that is present in the way graduates engage with students and their families as well as the larger community, collaborate with colleagues, and strive to serve the public good. Our case studies and surveys revealed that Bank Street graduates value community, diversity, and inclusion, and they integrate those values throughout their teaching practice. In fact, they actively pursue environments and placements that also support these values, where they can further Bank Street's mission. Through creating community within and beyond the school, respecting inclusive and diverse settings, and approaching the teaching profession with a collegial mindset, graduates apply the Bank Street approach to the world in order to serve the public good.



Liliana: A Bank Street Graduate in Action

In the previous three sections, we described the primary themes that emerged during our study of Bank Street graduates. Grouped by approach to students, approach to curriculum, and approach to the world, our findings illustrate how the preparatory experiences and classroom practices of graduates from Bank Street teacher preparation programs are connected. We also shared the results of our surveys and case studies, focusing on the Bank Street developmental-action approach in the classrooms of Bank Street graduates. In this section, we offer an in-depth look at what it looks like when one graduate, Liliana, applies the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach in her kindergarten classroom.

Bank Street's developmental-interaction approach infuses nearly everything about Liliana's teaching practice. Liliana earned a master's degree in early childhood special and general education from Bank Street and then worked at a dual language preschool for 5 years before joining Brooklyn New School (BNS) in 2008. Liliana teaches in a full inclusion (joint general and special education) kindergarten classroom that uses integrated co-teaching (ICT). In this model, one special education teacher, Liliana, and one general education teacher, Yazmin, team up to lead a class that includes up to 12 students with disabilities. Yazmin received her BA in childhood education and MA in special education from Brooklyn College. She was a student teacher at BNS, where she "fell in love with the school and its philosophy," and worked as a full-time substitute at BNS for a year before being offered the kindergarten placement with Liliana. While both teachers share responsibility for the instruction of all students, Liliana is specifically responsible for ensuring that the needs of students with disabilities are met. Liliana is thus keenly aware of the individual needs of each student, as she and Yazmin foster an environment where children can interact with the world at their own pace and in their own way.

Liliana and Yazmin regularly and substantively incorporate the goals of the developmental-interaction approach into their practice. They set up their classroom in centers and establish routines early on to allow students to independently engage in learning at their own pace and with materials that stimulate them. The curriculum addresses the "whole child," providing opportunities for development across the wide domains of human growth: physical, cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and ethical. Liliana attributes her holistic focus to her preparation at Bank Street. As she explains:

Most of my work at Bank Street had to do with really looking at children as a whole. We focused on gaining a deeper understanding of how children develop and how to meet their individual needs. This kind of work was about zooming into the different developmental areas—so we were thinking about the social and emotional piece, the cognitive and language component, and the physical development. A lot of emphasis was placed on self-regulation and helping children

figure out what self-regulating strategies work for them. We learned how to look at the whole child by making informal and formal observations and writing descriptive reviews and case studies of students.

Liliana first heard about Bank Street in one of her undergraduate classes at New York University when a friend shared about her experiences at Bank Street's Graduate School of Education. Liliana decided to look into the school for her master's degree. As she explains, "The minute I stepped inside Bank Street, I kind of knew that was like a great fit for me." Much of this had to do with the college's developmental-interaction approach and its emphasis on play. Liliana describes her experiences at the college as transformative and draws heavily from her preparation there in her current work as a classroom teacher. Liliana also speaks highly of her Bank Street advisor, who continues to be a mentor and close friend to this day.

Liliana has embraced the whole child focus of the developmental-interaction approach she learned while at Bank Street. She creates opportunities for students in her class to develop holistically in a safe and warm classroom community. Liliana's practice embodies the Bank Street approach in action and makes real the adage "I know a Bank Street teacher when I see one." Liliana is enthusiastic about her experiences at BNS and is particularly grateful that the school leadership supports the Bank Street approach:

[W]e have a principal in this school that believes in the Bank Street philosophy of progressive education and is committed to making inquiry-based and experiential learning the core of our curriculum. Her heart is in it. And I think that facilitates us being able to really get to know our students through observations, reflections. I am able to implement all the things I was taught at Bank Street about how to develop learning opportunities that promote academic and social-emotional growth.

Throughout the day, Liliana's Bank Street preparation is infused in the interactions, curriculum, activities, and professionalism that she organizes and implements. When we observed Liliana's classroom, we saw how the Bank Street approach to students, curriculum, and the world described previously are integrated. From her early morning preparations before students arrive, to connecting with students and families at the start and end of the school day, to her afternoon reflections and revisions in support of future instruction, Liliana's practice embodies the core principles of the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach.

Organizing for Engagement

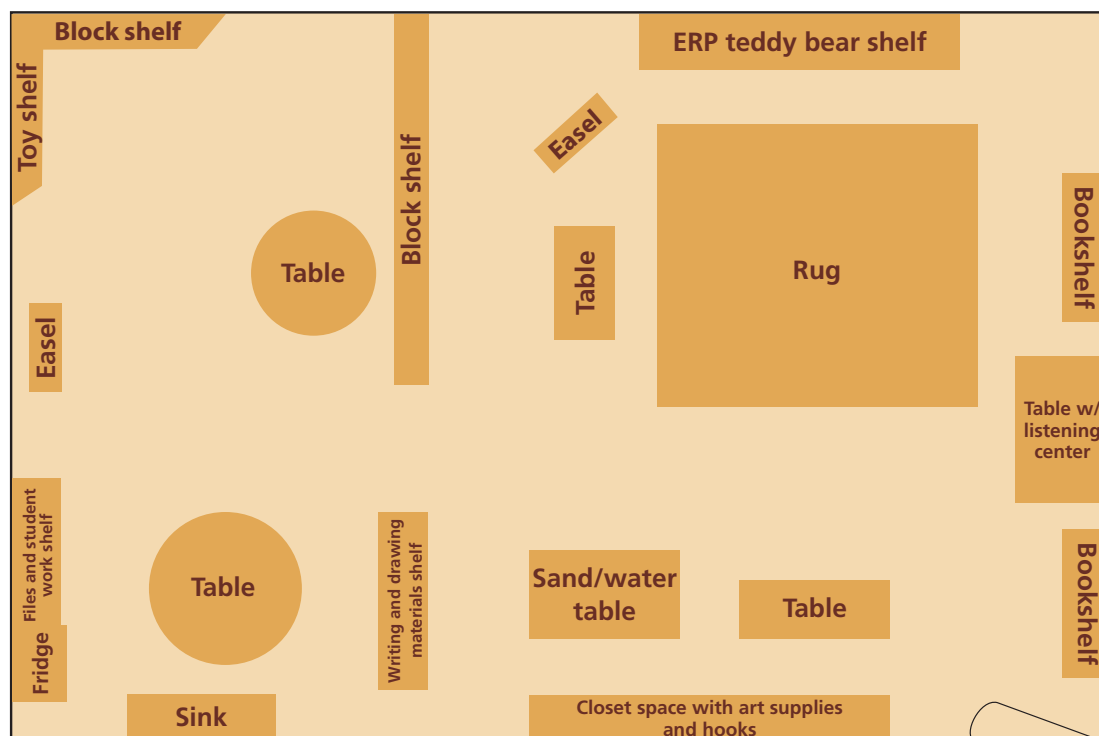
Early morning sunlight streams through the tall windows of Liliana's classroom, illuminating an array of student work hanging on the walls. Liliana lays out strips of paper on a round table towards the back of the room. Picking up a few strips, she turns around to face a gray-green bulletin board. Rows of student names are pinned above sealed sandwich bags hanging on the board. Inside the bags are pieces

of hardened clay. Some look like seashells, others like three-dimensional fish, and a few like fossils carved into the clay. Liliana takes two pushpins, one yellow and one green, and posts a white strip of paper onto the bottom left corner of the bulletin board. The strip reads, “We made sea creature models with clay.”

The class’s current long-term Shore Study is the focus of many projects on display. By the door hangs a sign that leads with the question: “What do you want to know about the shore?” Students’ questions fill the poster, including “What zone do dolphins live in? Where do sharks live? How do the flying fish fly if they are fish? How do animals eat in the water?” Painted cutouts of sea creatures seem to swim along a backplash of blue Kraft paper that covers the door to the class. Stuffed fish made of construction paper decorated with marker, cotton, and thread hang on the bulletin boards in the hallway. Several of them are pinned to the wall inside the classroom by the doorway.

In between displays of student work are various signs posted to help students with self-monitoring. One sign shows a girl sitting upright at a desk with the words “Whole-Body Listening” written above her head. Thick, labeled arrows point to different parts of the girl’s body: brain, eyes, ears, mouth, hands, back, and feet. Another sign tells students to check their “4 Bs”: brakes, breath, brain, and body. Sketches of individual students’ acts of kindness hang on a closet door next to rows of coat hooks. Just below the ceiling, high above all of the student work are colorful self-portraits of the 26 kindergarten children in Liliana’s class painted on large sheets of white paper.

Figure 24. Liliana’s Classroom

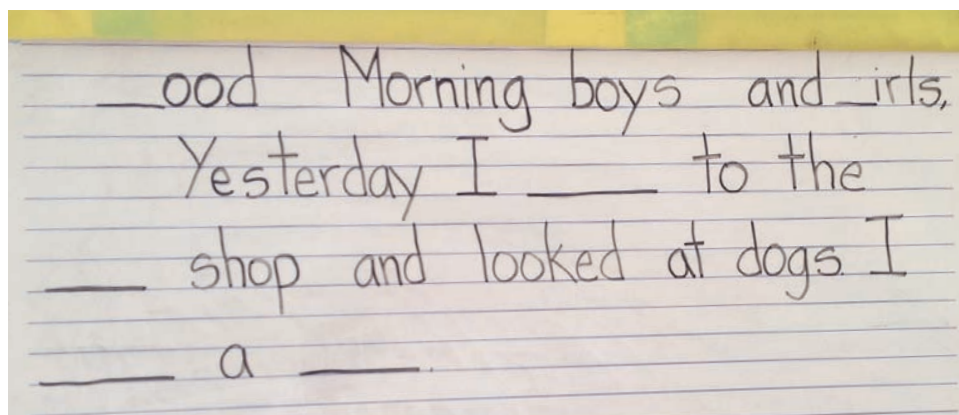


Liliana's classroom is spacious relative to many New York City school classrooms and has high ceilings and several light-filled windows. There are multiple tables, easels, a large rug area, and numerous shelves that house a wide array of materials—providing students with opportunity and space to explore and utilize their environment throughout the day. Figure 24 displays a map of the classroom.

A little after 8 a.m. Liliana's co-teacher, Yazmin, and one of the paraprofessionals, Hector, enter the room. Yazmin and Liliana immediately begin to discuss the centers that each will monitor during morning work. They then start to put out materials for the five different learning stations, which the students will rotate through during the week. The stations include: a literacy center exploring songs and poems, a Play-Doh station, a listening center, a math table, and a drawing table. Liliana places five composition notebooks on a round table by the sink in the corner of the room. The notebooks are labeled "Songs and Poems." Each has a typed poem about fish placed alongside it. Yazmin puts containers of Play-Doh on top of the covered sand box. In the center of a smaller table beneath the blackboard is a tape player connected to four headphones. Books, each labeled "My Drawing and Writing Book," surround the tape player on three sides. Another table is covered with "10 frames" worksheets for counting and has a plastic tub in the middle filled with number cards, direction cards (turn, think, count, show, record), and a number line made with Unifix cubes. She then places crayons and drawing paper on a rectangular table by the door.

Yazmin begins to write a morning message on the easel by the rug area. The morning message is a greeting that the teachers write to their students and the class reads together during circle time at the start of the day. The morning message helps students transition to the school day by engaging them in an academic task while simultaneously welcoming them into the classroom. On this day, Yazmin writes the following:

___ood Morning boys and ___irls.
Yesterday I ___ to the ___ shop and looked at dogs. I ___ a ___.



Here, the blanks indicate letters that the students will have to fill in as they review the morning message as a class. The complete message that the students later figure out collectively is:

Good Morning boys and girls.

Yesterday I went to the pet shop and looked at dogs. I want a dog.

While Yazmin writes the message, Liliana sets up a blue pocket chart hanging on the wall in preparation for the morning work her students will do as soon as they enter the class. She puts wallet-size headshots of the students beside icons of the various morning stations in the clear pockets. This chart tells students what station they are assigned to for their morning work, so that they can independently go to the appropriate centers and begin their tasks. Liliana and Yazmin assign the students a different station every day so that each child gets to complete all of the morning centers by the week's end.

"So, I'll stay back today and work with Rose and a few other students during library. I talked with Barbara about maybe making a book for Rose of all the things that she loves to do," Liliana says to Yazmin, referring to individualized plans for one of her special needs students, as she places glue sticks and scissors on the round table at the "Songs and Poems" station.

"That sounds like a great idea," Yazmin responds, organizing folders with students' names on them. As they hastily work to make sure all of the centers are in order before the students arrive, the two teachers continue to talk about individual students and the various strategies they will use to meet each child's needs throughout the day.

When describing the importance of the developmental-interaction approach, Biber (1967) explains:

It is not inevitable that this remarkable transformation in the ways of knowing [from sensory knowledge to more advanced, complex knowledge] will take place for every growing child or that his curiosity will remain active and exciting to him and to the people who live with him. It depends upon the experience provided in these formative years. (p. 2)

According to Biber, teachers must provide children with experiences that enable them to explore the physical and material world in ways that support both their cognitive and emotional development. Further, these experiences should be sensitive to one's surroundings, provide opportunities for action and inquiry, allow children to reproduce and symbolize their own life experiences through play, and support the development of language and concepts. Providing such experiences in the classroom requires thoughtful planning and preparation on the part of the teacher.

Morning prep time for Liliana is about making sure that her students have just the right set of opportunities to engage in learning that facilitates their social, emotional, and cognitive growth. Liliana accomplishes this based on her wide array of pedagogical approaches, activities, and materials; her extensive subject-matter knowledge; and the depth of her knowledge about each student, supported in part by her careful observations and recordings.

At the start of each day, Liliana reviews the notes she recorded during her careful observation of children on previous days. These notes help her determine what strategies she and Yazmin can use to meet every student's strengths, interests, and needs. Well before the students arrive, she is hard at work, utilizing her professional knowledge to set up the classroom for student learning and growth. She and Yazmin organize the materials students will need to engage in productive, developmentally meaningful tasks that foster exploration, play, and learning. They also support each other professionally by identifying tasks and roles for each other that support their goals for their students. By providing enough structure for students to participate in morning work independently, the teachers can focus their attention on a few specific centers to purposefully give students more individualized support. As Liliana puts it, she and Yazmin can "zoom in on specific students" when they spend the time to plan their class's morning work in this way. This aligns with the developmental-interaction approach, as children begin the day with a variety of joyful cognitive tasks and teachers support the individual strengths and needs of specific students.

Student-Centered Early Morning Connections and Transitions

When the clock hits 8:20 a.m., Liliana and Yazmin rush out of the classroom and head down the stairs leading to the back of the school building. They exit out to a giant blacktop, where parents and school buses drop off students who wait to be greeted by their teachers. When Liliana and Yazmin's children see their teachers, they come running over to them with ear-to-ear grins on their faces.

"Liliana, Liliana, I didn't get to eat breakfast." Liliana kneels down to meet Jade at eye-level. Jade, who is wearing a hot pink jacket suitable for the early morning breeze of the spring day, looks Liliana straight in the eye and says, "I think I need time to finish breakfast."

"Oh yes. Our engines need breakfast!" Liliana winks at Jade as she assures her that she will have time to eat breakfast before going to her morning center.

Liliana stands up and faces the group of children surrounding her. "Are you ready to go upstairs?" she asks in a cheerful tone. The little faces smile and nod. "Travel with a partner and follow Yazmin," she instructs as she watches the students grab a friend's hand and walk straight behind Yazmin. Liliana hangs in the back, holding the hand of Elijah, who chats with her about his weekend. "You had a special din-

ner out!” Liliana exclaims with eyes lit up as Elijah describes the family meal he had at a local restaurant.

When the two enter the classroom, the rest of the class has already begun hanging up their bags and coats on the hooks lining the walls. Children independently walk over to the pocket chart Liliana set up earlier. They scan the rows of the pocket chart and find their picture. To the left of their faces, they see an icon indicating what activity they are assigned to do this morning. The students then begin to spread out to their assigned stations. Without waiting for directions from their teachers, the students get straight to work cutting out poems and gluing them into their notebooks; uncapping markers and drawing pictures on white paper; taking out Play-Doh and sculpting model houses and animals. A few children walk directly to an assigned “breakfast table” in the back of the room, as Liliana and Yazmin recognize that some students aren’t fully nourished when they arrive at school, but need to be in order to have a successful day. Students can help themselves to fruit, cereal, milk, and juice sitting at the center of the table. After these students finish eating their breakfast, they transition to their assigned center.

“You’re with me at this station,” Jessie says to Amanda as she takes her by the hand and walks her over to the listening center. The two students open up their books and place headphones over their ears.

From the moment the teachers greet their students through the end of the children’s morning stations, Liliana and Yazmin focus on developing the whole child. They want to ensure that their students’ creativity, cognitive development, physical health, and emotional comfort are all nurtured from the very start of the day. The transitions also demonstrate how the teachers have helped students develop and sustain well-established routines. Liliana explains that building independence in her students involved a great deal of modeling and practice at the beginning of the year, something she and Yazmin are deeply committed to. She notes, “Sometimes that meant like pushing something—shrinking the next work time or shrinking whatever was next, because this is something that we are working on, and this is important for us.” Liliana and Yazmin prioritized setting routines for their students to ensure that they could become increasingly independent in their work over the course of the year. The students seem to embrace this independence, feeling a sense of ownership as they enthusiastically walk hand in hand to complete their assigned tasks.

Launching the Work Day Through a Participatory Morning Meeting

*“A sailor went to sea, sea, sea,
to see what he could see, see, see.”*

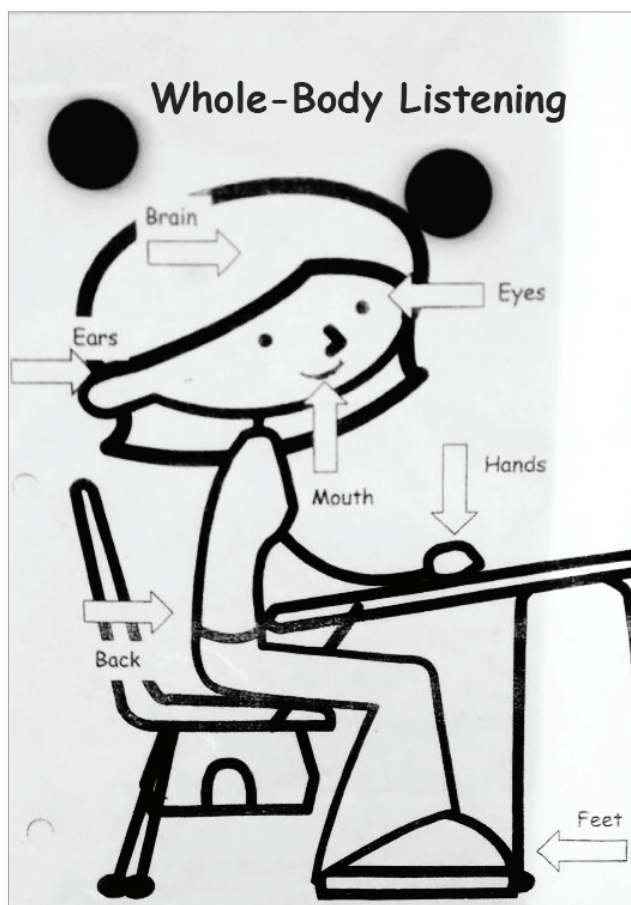
Liliana and Yazmin’s class gradually gather on the rug, sitting with their legs crossed

in a giant circle. They mime looking out in the distance while they sing this well-known nursery rhyme. The song is used to transition the students out of the morning learning stations and into the morning meeting. It also reminds the children of their current academic focus: the Shore Study. Liliana sits on the rug at the same level as the children and plays a set of bongos in her lap to go along with the singing. By the time the song is done, the students have all peacefully gathered around the rug and look at Liliana, eagerly awaiting the start of the morning meeting.

“Good morning, problem-solvers,” Liliana begins.

“Good morning, Liliana!” the class responds.

“Let’s check in with our engines,” Liliana continues as she shifts her body to sit upright. The students follow her lead. “Tug in your seat. Take a deep breath.” The children inhale and exhale with a sigh. “Check in with your bodies.” Liliana crosses her arms over her chest and rubs her arms. The students mimic her motions. “Check in with your brain.” Liliana’s hands have now moved up to her head; the students also tap their heads. “Let’s make sure we have ‘whole-body listening.’” Liliana takes out the “whole-body listening” sign from behind her back and shows it to the class. “Let’s check our eyes, our ears, our feet...” Liliana names each body part labeled on the sign, while the students touch each part with their hands. By the time the whole body check is done, students are attentively focused on Liliana, mesmerized by all that she does.



Liliana reads the morning message written on the easel aloud to the students, leaving out all of the missing letters and words:

___ood Morning boys and ___irls.

Yesterday I ___ to the ___ shop and looked at dogs. I ___ a ___.

She then says, “Get ready, I’m gonna read it a second time. Pull out your detective eye!” The children pretend to hold a magnifying glass up to their eyes. Jessie, who is wearing glasses, leans towards her friend and pretends to look closely into her peer’s eyes with the magnifying glass in hand. As Liliana reads the message this time, she stops for the blanks and asks the children, “Am I missing the letter or the word?”

Dennis’s hand shoots up for the first blank. “The letter!” he exclaims with a grin when Liliana calls on him. Liliana gasps and, with a smile running ear-to-ear, leans towards Dennis and asks him which letter. Dennis then stands up, rolls up the sleeves of his gray shirt, and goes, “guh, guh, guh” as he puts out his hand and makes a grasping motion.

“Can we all follow what Dennis is doing?” Liliana turns to the class, as the students also put out their hands and get ready to follow Dennis’s movement. Following Liliana’s lead, the circle of children make the grasping motion as they say, “guh, guh, guh” for the missing “G” in the word “good.”

“Yes!” Liliana smiles to the class. “We’re making a motion like ‘give me’ for the letter G.”

Dennis is then sent to the alphabet wall posted on the blackboard beside the meeting area. He gets the magnetic “G” off of the board and brings it back to the easel. After Dennis sticks the “G” magnet on the top right corner of the easel, he takes a dry-erase marker and writes the letter “G” into the appropriate blank space.

“I think Dennis deserves a heart clap!” Liliana exclaims as she gets her hands ready. The children also put their hands up to their chests and together make a heart shape in the air. When their hands reach the bottom tip of the invisible heart, the students clap their hands together, the loud clapping noise reverberating in the air.

The next blank in the message is for the word “went.” This time, Julian raises his hand to spell out the word. Liliana sees Julian and tells the students to listen carefully, as she is going to make the sounds for the next word before Julian comes up to spell it for the whole class. Liliana very slowly breaks up the phonemes for the word “went,” saying each sound while the children watch and listen carefully. She then motions for Julian to come up and stand beside her. Julian thinks carefully about each letter as he makes the sound and corresponding hand motions to spell out the word. Liliana does the motions with him so that he can be successful in front of the group. She then prompts the entire class to repeat the spelling and movements.

“Ok everyone. Get your bodies ready for a high engine!” The children eagerly squirm in their seats as they await their teacher’s cue. When Liliana begins to move

her arms, the children follow her as they sound out “went” rapidly and with excited voices three times. “Alright, now let’s try with a low engine.” The class spells out the word again with phonemes and gestures, only this time very slowly. “Now a just-right engine.” This time, the students spell the word and do the motions at a regular pace, also three times. Julian then walks over to the blackboard to look for the magnet of the word “went” on the alphabetic word wall. Several children sit on their hands and rock back and forth, seemingly to stop themselves from blurting out where the word is.

“You know, when we’re watching other boys and girls, we’re learning about their strategies” Liliana says to the wiggly children on the rug. “We’re learning about how they think about things. Watch Julian. Watch him.” The students’ bodies begin to still as they lean back into their crisscrossed positions. Julian then walks towards the row of words under the letter “W”.

“You know what I learned from Julian,” Liliana says, her gaze fixed on Julian, “He was thinking about the beginning part of that word.”

Julian stares at the row of words, his head tilted slightly and his right foot rolled over on its edge. “Is it a short word, a medium-sized word, or a long word?” Liliana asks, as Julian turns to face her. Liliana makes dramatic motions with her arms to help Julian see the distinction in length between short, medium, and long. Julian’s peers watch him with captivated gazes.

He says, “short,” and then looks back at the blackboard. Seeing the word “went,” he smiles, pulls it from the board, and walks back over to the easel to write out the word in the blank. A buzz of satisfaction fills the room, followed by three heart-shaped claps.

When all of the blanks are filled, Liliana tells the children, “We’re gonna get our voices ready. This is one of my favorite parts. It almost feels like story time where I’m just listening. Wake up your ears if they fell asleep!” The entire class then collectively reads the message out loud.

Liliana’s morning meeting is about more than just greeting students at the start of the day. It sets a tone for the classroom as a community and sets the stage for a day that will be full of playful learning, deep thinking, and communal caring.

She uses meeting time to create a space where students feel comfortable to take risks with their learning, because of the close relationships she fosters between her and the children as well as among the students. The positive affect in her class is clear and pervasive, as children are often seen smiling, hugging one another and their teachers, and humming to songs that appear to be playing on repeat in their heads. Space is offered for children to participate, work, and learn at their own pace with the individualized supports they each need. In these ways and others, Liliana simultaneously

addresses students' cognitive, social, and emotional development, seeing these as necessarily intertwined for children to learn. Liliana's own focus, as she puts it, is on

the social and emotional piece, social and emotional development of little ones, which is so important. We see it as the foundation of everything else that happens later on in your lives. So really taking the time, hitting the brakes literally, and just stopping and using every single minute of your day to really talk about problems that we might encounter, talk about possible solutions, talk about how you could self-regulate, talk about your engine, talk about your body.

This understanding that how students feel emotionally and physically interacts with their learning of academic content motivates Liliana to spend so much time helping students learn to self-regulate so they can best take advantage of the learning opportunities before them. For example, she begins the morning meeting with a "whole body check." She is transparent with her students about how they can all slow down to "think, watch, and listen." Liliana wants to ensure that students have "just-right engines," so they feel comfortable with the risks they take and can openly communicate with their teachers and peers. It also helps ensure their minds are alert so that they can do the challenging work of meaning-making that is emphasized throughout the day in Liliana's class.

The children are encouraged to spend time thinking before responding to the prompts. No amount of thinking time is considered too much. Rather, Liliana celebrates "think time" as an opportunity to bring to mind strategies "little ones" can use to help them with their academic work. The hard work of thinking, finding letters, remembering letter-sound agreement, and writing are all done in a playful manner to make learning joyful for the children.

Star Child: Everyone Counts!

It's late morning, just before lunch. The students gather on the rug, their eyes fixed on a closed box that Liliana has brought over to the group. "I cannot wait to pull out the name of the next child who will be the 'star child.'" Kneeling, Liliana looks up at the pillar behind her. There is a list of students' names under a sign that reads "star child." These are all children who have already had the opportunity to be interviewed and written about by their peers. The students' eyes follow Liliana's gaze. "You know what I'm noticing?" Liliana says. "There's only a small group of students who haven't been star children yet. This tells me..." Liliana taps her chin with her forefinger, as she seems to think about possible names for today's star child.

The children call out as many names as they can think of for who the star child might be. "Who will get a chance to be a star child today?" Liliana asks as she reaches her hand into the box of names. She pulls out a card, covering it with both

palms so the students cannot see. Liliana peers at the name, raises her shoulders, and makes an excited expression. Hands shoot up in the air as students are given a chance to ask questions to gather clues about who the star child is.

Liliana calls on a few students, who ask questions like, “Does the name have six letters or seven letters?” and “What letter does it end with?” When one child asks, “What letter does it start with?” Liliana replies in a low voice, “I’m going to do the motion [for the letter]. Watch me.” Just as she’s about to make the motion, she looks out at the group and stops herself. Putting her fists on her hips, Liliana leans forward and says, “I want to see if you’re really watching me.”

Liliana stands up and tiptoes behind the students. She stops in one spot and looks at the children, checking their gazes. The students follow her with their eyes like little hawks. She then quickly shuffles over to another place in the room and pauses again. Once more, she looks at her students, monitoring whether they are watching her. This time, the children have turned their bodies around to see their teacher. With a big smile, Liliana saunters over to a third point of the room.

Stopping there, she faces her students and asks, “You know how I could tell that you’re watching me?” Leaning over and covering the sides of her mouth with her hands, Liliana whispers, “Your eyes were following me.”

Liliana then does the motion for the letter “N” after which the students shout “N!” and then cheer, “Nina! Nina! Nina!”

The star child activity gives the children an opportunity to celebrate each student in Liliana and Yazmin’s class. In this way the teachers create a classroom in which “children are known and responded to as individuals” by the entire community (Biber, 1973). When the students have figured out that the star child of the day is Nina, they are given several minutes to think about their friend and write or draw something for her that takes into account her particular likes and interests—building and deepening connections among the students and honoring the individual within the collective. Over the course of the week the students will jointly produce a booklet of notes and pictures to share with the star child, who can then bring this special gift from her classmates home to enjoy with her family and further cement the close connections among her schoolmates with her family as well.

During this activity, Liliana also has another opportunity to teach students how to be careful observers of their surroundings. She does this in a playful manner that mesmerizes the students. In so doing, she engages the children in challenging thinking and observational work while encouraging a joyful approach to learning among her students. Her children can “become detectives” as they playfully practice the skills of observation that will help them in their lifelong pursuit of learning.

Work Time: Play and Choice as Vehicles for Growth and Learning

“We have a lot of jobs today that we need to get finished,” Liliana tells the class as she walks over to the easel. The students have returned from lunch and a bit of afternoon lethargy is beginning to settle in. Liliana’s prompt to think about what centers they will go to during work time has given the students a jolt, and they shift their slumped bodies to sit upright and attentive on the rug.

“Some children wanted to finish their drawings for Nina. Some of us were working on blocks. Others were working on making an engine meter just like our voice-level meter.” There is a quiet buzz on the rug as the children talk about what they want to work on this afternoon.

“I know Zion is waiting to pass out the pictures, but I want to bring up something that happened this morning.” Liliana motions to Larry who stands up and walks over to stand beside Liliana. “What happened Larry? I think we can all learn from Larry and what he learned.” The children look up at Larry expectantly.

“Well, I was going to go to my morning station, and I was trying to get to my hook. But I didn’t know how. So I stepped on the blocks and they fell.” Larry speaks to the class candidly and without any sense of embarrassment or shame.

“Right, the block structure fell,” Liliana says, looking at the previous day’s block builders. Ada looks at Katie who shrugs. They then both turn back to Liliana and Larry, seemingly unfazed by the loss of yesterday’s hard work.

“So what did you learn, Larry?” Liliana asks.

“What you gotta do with the easel, you gotta move it over,” Larry replies.

“Oh! You have to move it over,” Liliana says grinning at Larry. “And what’s a brain tool we could use to figure out what to do?”

“The problem-solving chart!” another student calls out from the rug.

“Yes! Definitely!” Liliana says to the child. “So, it seems we have a problem. The block structure is too close to the easel and too close to the hooks. What can we do?” Liliana looks out at the group of children in genuine wonder.

“The blocks are too close to the easel and hook? It’s gotta be away from it,” Catie responds.

“Hmm.” Liliana thinks aloud to the students. “Maybe we can put some tape on the ground to remind us, ‘Oh, when we get there, we can’t go past because we’re too close to the hooks and easel, and we don’t want our block structure to get knocked

down.” The students on the rug nod their heads in agreement. Liliana then prompts Zion to begin passing out the picture cards, while she goes to the supply shelf to get some masking tape.

Zion sits on the chair beside the easel and pulls students’ picture cards from the basket he holds. The children go up to Zion one by one to take their pictures from him. They independently select which center they would like to go to by placing their pictures next to the appropriate icon on the pocket chart hanging over the easel. As usual, there are limits to the number of students who can be at each station. The block builders from the day before go over to their collapsed blocks and begin rebuilding their hospital. Some students are at the water table, exploring measurements using the tools in the table. A larger group of students are working on some artwork at the longer tables in the classroom. These include the drawings for Nina and the engine meter that Liliana mentioned at the beginning of the session.

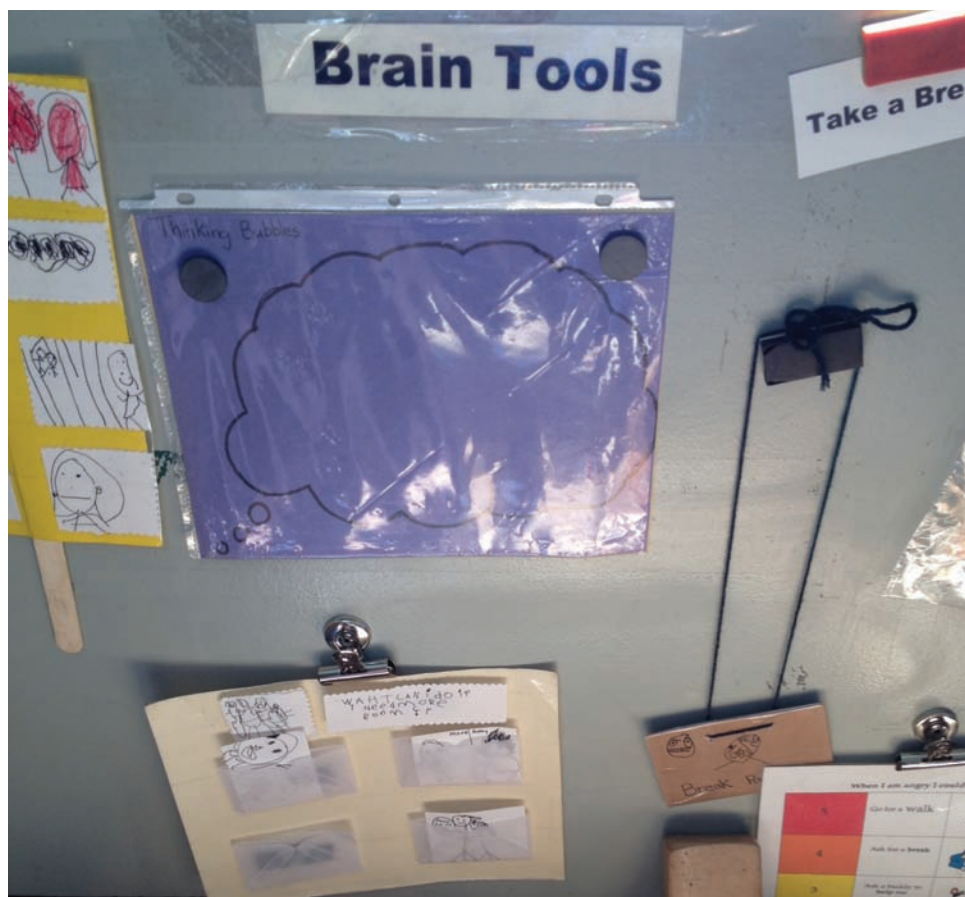
Four students are over in the pretend play area, which is surrounded by large hollow blocks. Rose is feeding a baby doll, while Dennis cooks food in a plastic bin. “Everything is ready to eat!” Dennis calls out. Elijah then ties a bandana around his neck as if getting ready for a feast. Christy starts to set the round table with some plastic plates and forks.

Another group of students is painting sea creatures at the long rectangular table by the door. Jimmy runs over to show Liliana his painting of an aquarium he had visited with his father.

“I see...” Liliana begins. She then guides Jimmy back over to the table. The two sit down next to each other. Liliana lists all of the things she sees in Jimmy’s painting. She then gasps, “Oh! I see Jimmy added feelings.” Jimmy looks at Liliana with an expression of wonder. “You know how I know?” Liliana continues. Jimmy stares at his teacher, unsure of how to respond. “I see there’s a smiling face on the fish,” Liliana whispers as she leans closer to Jimmy. Jimmy smiles at Liliana. He then decides to move to another center.

“Liliana, I don’t know what to do.” Nina walks over to her teacher with a puzzled and pouty face.

Liliana walks over to the wall of brain tools. “Here, let’s try using this to help us.” Liliana passes Nina the problem-solving sign. Nina uses the sign to “stop, look, and think” about her choices. She looks around the room, considers a couple of options, and then decides to finish her drawing from the star child session earlier in the day. She joins a group of her peers sitting at the small table by the wall. The children laugh and chat away as they discuss the drawings they are working on for their friend Nina. As usual, there is an enthusiastic buzz in the room as the students work at the centers and move between stations at their own pace. A joyful energy fills the air as the students engage in their play-centered work time.



The playful learning that students partake in during work time is central to Liliana's practice. It speaks to one of the main aspects of the developmental-interaction approach that Biber identifies in her early works—opportunity for action response. She writes:

A third kind of experience we want to provide for children is full opportunity for doing and making, for acquiring a large repertoire of what we might call action responses. Much of life in school for the very young child consists of this kind of experience. With blocks he builds—high, wide, low structures. Very often, before his buildings really represent anything in the real world, he is using blocks for the plain skill and pleasure of constructing and designing in space. To be able to use crayons—not just for scribbling but to enclose spaces, make parallel lines or trail very neatly and exactly just within the edges of the paper—is a kind of skill the child develops and elaborates and enjoys. He is learning how to make objects follow his intention, and this is accomplishment even before he begins to be able to make a picture of a house, a girl or a tree. It

is accomplishment to be able to enclose spaces, round or square ones, or circles that cross each other. It is accomplishment to be able to use a hammer and make the nail go straight into the wood. Certainly when you can make two pieces of wood stay together with the nail that you hammered in, there is a sense of mastery and skill. So is starting with an empty page, with great concentration, covering it all over with red paint.

In general, what is important is to give the child the opportunity to develop manipulative, constructive skills and, with these skills, to have the experience of changing the things in his world. (Biber, 1967, p. 4–5)

Liliana gives her students these opportunities for action response through the various centers that are set up during work time. The students can explore their worlds through whatever media best speak to them in any given moment and on any given day. She also ensures that the environment is fully conducive to such exploration by engaging the children in some problem-solving, such as around the issue of space that Larry came across earlier in the day. After Larry shares his dilemma with the class, Liliana guides the students toward a productive resolution that works for the class.

With the appropriate opportunities, structures, and routines in place, Liliana's class joyfully participates in action response learning during work time. In this way, work time encourages a “zest for living that comes from taking in the world with all five senses alert” and intellectual curiosity that promotes lifelong learning (Bank Street College of Education, 2014e).

Wrapping Up and Beginning Anew

When the students engage in a few more activities to wrap up the day, initiated via a set of movement exercises Yazmin leads. She begins with a “rollercoaster stretch,” where the children pretend their bodies are moving along the tracks of a rollercoaster. They reach their arms up high to the sky, standing on their tippy-toes, and pretend that their hands are at the top of a tall incline on the rollercoaster. Then they move their arms downward in a swan-dive motion, imitating a car going down on the rollercoaster tracks. Yazmin then moves on to another stretching routine related to the Shore Study. “Now, reach down to the bottom of the ocean,” Yazmin says, bending over and mimicking her own directions, which the students mirror. She then stands up tall and the students do the same. “Ok, now shake off the water and the sand.” Yazmin shakes each hand and then each foot. The children also shake the water and sand off their hands and their feet. After this stretch, the students form a clump on the rug and listen to a story about coral reefs.

Afterwards, an occupational therapist comes into the room and guides the students in a lesson on writing numbers, their last academic activity of the day. The children each have a piece of chalk and a small chalkboard to practice writing numbers 0–9.

When they are done writing all of the numbers, they move on to letters until it is time for recess.

The class walks down the stairs towards the back of the building, side by side or hand in hand with their assigned classroom buddies. Yazmin leads the way, while Liliana walks with Ramya in the back of the line. Once outside, the students have to exit from the blacktop area and cross the street to get to the playground. The other kindergarten classes are already out there playing. Liliana and Yazmin's students rush off to the swings and monkey bars, as their teachers walk around and monitor their play. Liliana keeps a close eye on Rose, one of the students with special needs in her class. She follows Rose around the playground at a distance so that Rose can freely play with her peers, but steps in to help Rose as needed, such as when Rose has trouble climbing certain structures independently.

When recess comes to a close, Yazmin calls out, "Yazmin and Liliana's class, please come line up!" She stands by a small cottage-like structure where the bathrooms are. The students find their buddies and line up in front of Yazmin. Liliana walks over slowly with Rose, who is skipping with the lingering excitement of recess. Yazmin looks out over the line to make sure that all of her students are present. Before she is about to cross the street, Yazmin turns around to check on her students once more. She notices that some children are not in line. "Where are your friends?" Yazmin asks the class.

One student says meekly, "Some of them are behind the bathroom."

Yazmin makes a stern face as she turns towards the bathroom. Calling through the fence Yazmin says, "You need to come out from there and come line up. It's not safe."

Liliana watches as four students emerge from behind the brick wall of the bathroom building. With their heads down, they walk around the steel fence and join their classmates in line. Each child walks past Liliana, but does not make eye contact with her. Liliana then walks to the front of the line where Yazmin is standing. "We talked about this many times, Liliana," Yazmin says to her colleague.

"We need to see that you know how to be safe before and after recess," Liliana affirms in a steady voice as she looks out at all of the children. "When you do this, you are making a choice. You are making a choice to keep playing when we ask you to line up. Am I going to follow others hiding behind the bathroom? Am I going to keep playing? Or am I going to find my partner?"

"Find my partner," the children say in unison.

"Remember, you are the ones making the choice to be safe or not safe." Liliana turns to face Yazmin who nods at her. Yazmin continues to lead the students back to the classroom.

When the students return to their class, the children are prompted to gather things for dismissal. After they get their backpacks and lunch bags from their hooks, the students bring their things to the rug. They sit and chat, read, or play games with each other as they wait for their names to be called. Parents show up at the doorway to pick the children up from their classroom. Liliana and Yazmin make a point to warmly greet each parent, pulling a few aside to have more extended conversations with them about their specific child.

After parent pick-up, Liliana and Yazmin walk the remaining students down to the school cafeteria for bus pick-up. Echoes of children talking, laughing, and shouting reverberate against the cafeteria walls as students wait for their buses to be called. The teachers wait with their students until all of the children are out of the school building. As they leave, the students wave to their teachers, who call out, “We’ll see you tomorrow!” After the last child has left, Liliana and Yazmin walk back up the stairs to their classroom, talking about individual children, and their plans for them tomorrow, along the way.

To the very end of the day, Liliana aims to make process transparent to her students. When children make decisions with which she feels uncomfortable, she explicates how the students go through a thinking process that involves a choice—either to keep playing by unsafely hiding behind the bathroom or to find their partners and line up with the rest of the class. Students have responsibility over their decisions and the consequences that unfold from their choices. Liliana works with her students to help them understand processes that can help them make productive choices, skills that will be important well beyond the kindergarten year.

This challenging moment for the class does not get in the way of the children leaving in good spirits. In fact, the students take their roles as learners who have autonomy to explore and make choices seriously. This is evident in their eagerness to return to school the next day. The end of the day is an opportunity for the students to soak in the emotional ties they have with their teachers and appreciate the caring they feel. Teachers can also touch base with individual students’ families in order to keep lines of communication open and to ensure that everyone is on the same page about how the different systems can work together to support each child.

Immediately after dismissal, Liliana activates her own reflection and planning process, in concert with her teaching partner. They continue to think about their students, their successes and challenges through the day, and how they can best meet the individual strengths, interests, and needs of each child. The conversations about children range from academic to social to emotional means of support, emblematic of how their practice is deeply infused with the principals of the developmental-interaction approach.

The Bank Street Impact

When asked what her closing thoughts are on the Bank Street approach and how it has impacted her practice, Liliana explains:

My experience at Bank Street has allowed me to understand children more. Has allowed me to learn about them through their play. I feel like it's also made me more of a reflective teacher and helped me come to the realization that this kind of work doesn't end with a master's degree. The work is an ongoing process. It's ongoing growth just like what happens to the little ones. For them it's an ongoing learning process, developmentally in so many areas, and it's the same for adults. It's the same for teachers....At Bank Street, I feel like we did a lot of work around informal and formal observations, fall visits to work with families, and student teaching in several sites. Reflecting on our experiences is part of our ongoing work. I mean the whole purpose of making so many observations is to take the time to think about what you're observing and to try to think about how that is guiding your teaching practices and your approach to teaching.

As evidenced through her words and her practice, Liliana is a teacher who truly values the whole child and designs her practice to spur growth and development for her students across the broad spectrum of developmental domains. Toward this end, she organizes a wide array of experiences to help her students become confident, independent makers of meaning, deeply engaged with self-regulatory processes and social-emotional learning. Liliana uses the extensive subject-matter knowledge that she developed at Bank Street to create opportunities for her students to engage with academic content and make meaningful connections with others and the world around them.

Play is an essential tool for growth in Liliana's practice. For her, play is not just something that is fun for children; it is central to their social, emotional, and intellectual development. Further, Liliana is a careful observer of children, and she adjusts her practice in response to the themes and notes she records throughout the day. To her, children learn best when they are aware of their thinking and decision-making processes; the same is true for teachers. Her ultimate goal is to prepare her students to be engaged and productive citizens of the world, well beyond their kindergarten days. Liliana is a teacher who practices the developmental-interaction approach daily. Through her time at Bank Street and her various experiences as an early childhood educator, Liliana has become a teacher who has learned, "to foster children's curiosity, love of learning, tolerance of human difference, supportive sense of community, and engagement with the world around them" (Bank Street College of Education, 2014a).

Conclusion

The Bank Street College of Education is both a historical and contemporary institution of progressive education.

Historical, in that it has its roots in the Progressive Era movement. It was founded in 1916 as The Bureau of Educational Experiments by educator Lucy Sprague Mitchell, a compatriot of John Dewey and others influential in the progressive education movement of that time. Mitchell and her colleagues concluded that building a new kind of educational system was essential to building a better, more rational, more humane world.

Contemporary, as the college continues to promote an enlightened orientation to education that seeks to ground progressive ideals in the modern contexts of schooling and related policies. A century after its founding, Bank Street College of Education continues a long and storied tradition of providing educational opportunities with a progressive orientation to children and educators through a wide range of programs in its well-regarded School for Children and Graduate School of Education.

This study explored the impact of a Bank Street preparation on graduates of the college's teacher preparation programs, via extensive surveys, analysis of student learning gains, and in-depth field studies in schools and classrooms.

We found that Bank Street graduates:

- stay in teaching and take on a variety of educational leadership roles;
- feel exceptionally well prepared to meet the needs of diverse students;
- offer an engaging, developmentally supportive, inquiry-oriented curriculum;
- engage in child-centered practices that support a wide range of learners; and
- are valued by school leaders seeking to create progressive educational environments.

In schools that are organized around the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach, we saw joyful, productive classrooms where students engage in experiential learning, investigate the natural and social world, learn to collaborate and communicate, and are developing the 21st-century skills that are much talked about in today's reform conversations. Graduates are grateful for the preparation they have received and feel a deep responsibility to help develop these conditions for learning wherever they can. As one graduate explained:

I use my Bank Street training every day. I have never before or since been in a place where children's development and thinking was examined and thought about so carefully. I hope that with the current focus on testing and literacy to the exclusion of all other pursuits, students at Bank Street still get this thorough grounding in child development and in developmentally appropriate teaching. I also hope that teachers learn how to look critically at the current curricular models and their disregard for child development.

Another graduate put it this way:

I think that Bank Street's focus on education that is developmentally appropriate is essential at this juncture in American education. There is an even greater push for rigor, sometimes beyond the scope of what is reasonable for children of a certain age. We need more people in the education world who understand the needs of children and who are willing to be activists supporting the needs of their students, another pillar of a Bank Street education.

Nearly a century ago, Lucy Sprague Mitchell wrote a credo envisioning what Bank Street could and should be. While Bank Street has naturally changed with the times, what lies at its heart has remained remarkably consistent with this credo. There can be no better summary of the Bank Street approach than Mitchell's aspiration to cultivate "the spirit of imaginative and critical inquiry" that she described in her credo:

What potentialities in human beings—children, teachers, and ourselves—do we want to see develop?

- A zest for living that comes from taking in the world with all five senses alert
- Lively intellectual curiosities that turn the world into an exciting laboratory and keep one ever a learner
- Flexibility when confronted with change and ability to relinquish patterns that no longer fit the present

- The courage to work, unafraid and efficiently, in a world of new needs, new problems, and new ideas
- Gentleness combined with justice in passing judgments on other human beings
- Sensitivity, not only to the external formal rights of the “other fellow,” but to him as another human being seeking a good life through his own standards
- A striving to live democratically, in and out of schools, as the best way to advance our concept of democracy

Our credo demands ethical standards as well as scientific attitudes. Our work is based on the faith that human beings can improve the society they have created. (as cited in Bank Street College of Education, 2014e)



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Appendix A: Research Design, Methodology, and School Sites

Part 1: Surveys of Bank Street Graduates, Employers, And Comparison Teachers

For this study, the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE) contracted with WestEd to assist with developing and administering the following three surveys:

- *Teaching Program Survey*: Bank Street College Graduate School of Education graduates
- *Comparison Teacher Survey*: teachers working for the New York State Department of Education (NYS DOE), who did not graduate from Bank Street
- *Employer Survey*: principals who hired or were likely to hire Bank Street graduates

The description of survey data collection activities presented below represent the collaborative effort of SCOPE and WestEd, as directed and supervised by SCOPE's principal investigators for this project. (For further details, see the technical report, *The Preparation, Professional Pathways, and Effectiveness of Bank Street Graduates*.)

Sample Selection

The sample for the Teaching Program Survey (N = 2,756) included all Bank Street College Graduate School of Education graduates from 2000 to 2012. This census sample was derived from databases provided by the Bank Street Registrar's Office and Institutional Advancement Office.

The sample for the Employer Survey included principals in 389 schools in 29 states who employed or were likely to employ Bank Street graduates who were pre-kindergarten through grade 12 teachers. This sample was generated from the following three sources: 1) responses to the item on the Teaching Program Survey that asked where the graduates currently teach, 2) a list of schools where Bank Street student teachers were placed during the 2012–13 school year, and 3) a list of school representatives who attended a job fair at Bank Street during the 2012–13 school year.

The sample for the Comparison Teacher Survey contained 1,000 classroom teachers in kindergarten through eighth grade who were randomly selected from the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) membership database. Our aim for this sample was to identify a large enough group of classroom teachers who received their teaching certifications from institutions other than Bank Street College, which would allow for comparisons to be drawn between their survey responses and the survey responses of the graduates of Bank Street's teaching programs. We leveraged our connections at NYSUT, a union composed of more than 600,000 individuals who work in or are retired from working in schools, colleges, and healthcare facilities in New York, to obtain a sample of classroom teachers from the union's membership. NYSUT provided us with a random sample of 7,000 kindergarten through eighth grade educators from their membership database. We removed all nonclassroom teachers from this group and randomly selected 1,000 classroom teachers, whose email addresses were confirmed to be valid, for our comparison teacher sample.

Survey Administration Activities

We used a mixed-mode approach for the Teaching Program Survey, the Employer Survey, and the Comparison Teacher Survey utilizing online surveys, paper surveys, and, in the case of the Comparison Teacher Survey, a phone survey. Allowing individuals to respond using multiple modes likely resulted in improved coverage and representativeness for certain types of individuals, such as those not comfortable with the Internet, and individuals for whom we did not have up-to-date contact information: their email address; mailing address; or, for the Comparison Teacher Survey only, phone number. Our general strategy was to begin the survey administration activities via email and move on to other approaches after the emails were no longer eliciting large numbers of completed surveys. For individuals in the Teaching Program Survey sample without valid email addresses on record with the college, we used only mail-based approaches. After the mailings, we followed up with additional emails and, for the Comparison Teacher Survey, with phone calls.

We used a variety of incentive strategies to increase survey participation. For the Comparison Teacher Survey, we used a prepaid incentive method that provided each respondent a \$10 Amazon.com gift card at the time they were invited to complete the survey. In addition, we held a raffle for an iPad mini for all comparison teachers who completed the survey.

Response Rates and Non-Response Analyses

The response rates for the Teaching Program Survey (53.0%), Employer Survey (53.7%), and Comparison Teacher Survey (40.7%) are shown in Table A-1 (next page).

The response rate of 53.0% for the Teaching Program Survey included 48.8% of the respondents who completed the survey and another 4.3% of the respondents

Table A-1. Response Rates for the Surveys

Survey	Complete		Partially complete		No response		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teaching Program Survey	1,273	48.8%	111	4.3%	1,227	47.0%	2,611	100.0%
Employer Survey	201	51.7%	8	2.1%	180	46.3%	389	100.0%
Comparison Teacher Survey	380	38.0%	27	2.7%	593	59.3%	1,000	100.0%

Note. The response rates for the Teaching Program Survey exclude the 145 graduates who did not have valid email and mailing addresses. For the Teaching Program Survey and the Comparison Teacher Survey, respondents were classified as complete if they completed up to and beyond the “About You” sections. For the Employer Survey, only respondents who completed the entire survey were classified as complete.

Table A-2. Response Rates for the Teaching Program Survey by Year of Graduation

Year of graduation	Complete		Partially complete		No response		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
2000	70	41.4%	3	1.8%	96	56.8%	169	100.0%
2001	56	43.4%	3	2.3%	70	54.3%	129	100.0%
2002	59	31.9%	4	2.2%	122	65.9%	185	100.0%
2003	118	34.4%	18	5.2%	207	60.3%	343	100.0%
2004	53	45.3%	8	6.8%	56	47.9%	117	100.0%
2005	62	37.6%	8	4.8%	95	57.6%	165	100.0%
2006	110	47.6%	13	5.6%	108	46.8%	231	100.0%
2007	102	50.7%	8	4.0%	91	45.3%	201	100.0%
2008	119	53.6%	6	2.7%	97	43.7%	222	100.0%
2009	130	63.4%	6	2.9%	69	33.7%	205	100.0%
2010	140	56.5%	12	4.8%	96	38.7%	248	100.0%
2011	135	65.2%	12	5.8%	60	29.0%	207	100.0%
2012	119	63.0%	10	5.3%	60	31.7%	189	100.0%
Total	1,273	48.8%	111	4.3%	1,227	47.0%	2,611	100.0%

Note. The response rates exclude the 145 graduates who did not have valid email and mailing addresses. Respondents were classified as complete if they completed up to and beyond the “About You” section.

who partially completed the survey. The response rates disaggregated by year of graduation for the Teaching Program Survey are shown in Table A-2. Not surprisingly, the response rates were substantially higher for more recent cohorts. In addition to having graduated more recently and therefore having a closer connection to Bank Street College, the contact information for these individuals was more likely to be accurate.

The response rates varied somewhat across the different program categories for the Teaching Program Survey (see Table A-3). The highest response rate, 56.2%, was among graduates of Literacy programs (who received a teaching credential). The program category with the largest number of graduates, Childhood General Education, had a 45.9% response rate.

Table A-3. Response Rates for the Teaching Program Survey by Program Category

Program category	Complete		Partially complete		No response		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Early Childhood General Education	491	45.7%	42	3.9%	542	50.4%	1075	100.0%
Childhood General Education	759	48.5%	77	4.9%	729	46.6%	1565	100.0%
Middle School General Education	111	55.2%	7	3.5%	83	41.3%	201	100.0%
Early Childhood Special Education	225	52.3%	13	3.0%	192	44.7%	430	100.0%
Childhood Special Education	232	49.4%	15	3.2%	223	47.4%	470	100.0%
Middle School Special Education	3	37.5%	0	0.0%	5	62.5%	8	100.0%
Literacy*	77	56.6%	7	5.1%	52	38.2%	136	100.0%

Note. There are programs that fall under more than one category, so there are respondents who are double-counted (i.e., counted in two different program categories) in this table.

*There is only one Bank Street College Literacy program that culminates in a teaching certification (Teaching Literacy and Childhood General Education). Graduates of this program took the Teaching Program Survey. All others took a separate survey administered to graduates of non-teaching programs at Bank Street. The results of that survey are not included in this study.

The response rate for the Employer Survey was 53.7% and included 51.7% of the respondents who completed the survey and another 2.1% of the respondents who partially completed the survey. The response rates varied across the five groups of respondents for the Employer Survey (see Table A-4). As expected, the response rate was highest for the respondents who had multiple Bank Street graduates working at their school who agreed to have their names in the cover letter (64.3%); and the response rate was lowest for the respondents who were only on the job fair list (47.1%)

Table A-4. Response Rates for the Employer Survey by Cover Letter Group

Cover letter group	Complete		Partially complete		No response		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Multiple BSC graduate names in letter	34	60.7%	2	3.6%	20	35.7%	56	100.0%
Single BSC graduate name in letter	109	50.0%	3	1.4%	106	48.6%	218	100.0%
Placement list only	23	54.8%	2	4.8%	17	40.5%	42	100.0%
Job fair list only	8	47.1%	0	0.0%	9	52.9%	17	100.0%
BSC graduate(s) did not agree to use name(s)	27	48.2%	1	1.8%	28	50.0%	56	100.0%
Total	201	51.7%	8	2.1%	180	46.3%	389	100.0%

The response rate for the Comparison Teacher Survey was 40.7% and included 38.0% of the respondents who completed the survey and an additional 2.7% who partially completed the survey. The response rates for the Comparison Teacher Survey disaggregated by years of educational experience, a variable include in the NYSUT database, are shown in Table A-5 (next page). The NYSUT database did not include information indicating when the experience variable was last updated. A comparison of the teachers' survey responses to the item asking about years of classroom teaching experience and the variable in NYSUT's database indicated that the NYSUT data was likely 2–4 years out of date at the time the survey was administered. Nevertheless, the response rate was highest for teachers with 16 or more years of experience (54.2%). For teachers with fewer than 10 years of experience, the response rate was 35.5%.

Table A-5. Response Rates for the Comparison Teacher Survey by Total Years of Educational Experience

Years of experience	Complete		Partially complete		No response		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1–3 years	61	36.1%	1	0.6%	107	63.3%	169	100.0%
4–6 years	89	35.2%	11	4.3%	153	60.5%	253	100.0%
7–9 years	55	28.6%	1	0.5%	136	70.8%	192	100.0%
10–12 years	70	43.2%	6	3.7%	86	53.1%	162	100.0%
13–15 years	42	42.0%	4	4.0%	54	54.0%	100	100.0%
16 or more years	61	50.8%	4	3.3%	55	45.8%	120	100.0%
Missing	2	50.0%	0	0.0%	2	50.0%	4	100.0%
Total	380	38.0%	27	2.7%	593	59.3%	1,000	100.0%

“Opportunity to Learn” Composite Variables

One set of survey items asked respondents how much opportunity they had to engage in specific teaching activities directly related to classroom practice during their teacher preparation program. These items were used to create an “Opportunities to Learn about Teaching English Language Arts” composite variable and an “Opportunities to Learn about Teaching Mathematics” composite variable. Boyd et al. (2009) have demonstrated that teachers who have had more opportunity in their teacher preparation programs to learn about teaching English language arts and mathematics (as measured by these composite variables) are more likely to have greater student gains on reading and math scores their first year of teaching.

Figure A-1 (next page) notes the items used in the construction of these composite variables.

Figure A-1. Survey Items Used to Create Composite Variables of Program Opportunities

SURVEY ITEMS INCLUDED IN “OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN ABOUT TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS” COMPOSITE VARIABLE

- Learn about characteristics of emergent readers
- Learn ways to teach student metacognitive strategies for monitoring comprehension
- Learn ways to teach decoding skills
- Learn ways to encourage phonemic awareness
- Learn ways to build student interest and motivation to read
- Learn how to help students make predictions to improve comprehension
- Learn how to support older students who are learning to read
- Learn ways to teach reading and writing to students at different stages or reading abilities
- Learn how to activate students’ prior knowledge
- Listen to an individual child read aloud for the purpose of assessing his/her reading achievement
- Plan a guided reading lesson
- Learn to teach students to organize their ideas prior to writing
- Discuss methods for using student reading assessment results to improve your teaching
- Practice what you learned about teaching reading in your field experiences
- Study national or state standards for reading/language arts
- Review local district reading curriculum

SURVEY ITEMS INCLUDED IN “OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN ABOUT TEACHING MATHEMATICS” COMPOSITE VARIABLE

- Learn typical difficulties students have with place value
- Learn typical difficulties students have with fractions
- Use representations (e.g., geometric representation, graphs, number lines) to show explicitly why a procedure works
- Prove that a solution is valid or that a method works for all similar cases
- Study, critique, or adapt math curriculum materials
- Learn how to facilitate math learning for students in small groups
- Adapt math lessons for students with diverse needs and learning styles
- Practice what you learned about teaching math in your field experience
- Study national or state standards for mathematics
- Review local district mathematics curriculum

Part 2: Value-Added Modeling Of Student–Teacher Linked Data

In order to examine where Bank Street graduates were placed, which students they taught, and whether effects on student achievement could be discerned, NYC DOE provided SCOPE three sets of multiyear data: 1) NYC DOE human resources (HR) teacher data, 2) student biographic-achievement data, and 3) teacher–student–course linkage data. SCOPE facilitated a process whereby the NYC DOE would flag Bank Street graduates within the datasets. NYC DOE then removed all personally identifiable information before sharing the data on students and teachers with researchers at SCOPE. Below, we describe what each dataset contained as well as the decisions we made to select the final sample and variables for our value-added modeling (VAM) analyses. (For further details, see the technical report, *The Preparation, Professional Pathways, and Effectiveness of Bank Street Graduates*.)

Data Provided by the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE)

The NYC DOE provided us with human resources data from 1998 through 2012, including position, teaching certification, and demographic data (as described in Table A-6, next page).

The NYC DOE also provided student data, including achievement test scores, information about student income (free/reduced-price lunch status), ethnicity, language status, special education status, and school attendance (as described in Table A-7, page 187).

The NYC DOE provided student–teacher linkage data for grades 4–8 from SY2005–06 through SY2011–12. Table A-8 (page 188) describes the numbers of students and teachers we could link by school year.

We matched teachers from the Bank Street College database of graduates with the NYC DOE human resources database (HR Hub). The NYC DOE conducted the matching of Bank Street College graduates in the NYC DOE human resources. A total of 1,878 of Bank Street College graduates were matched in the NYC DOE human resources database over a 14-year period (between SY1998–99 and SY2011–12). Table A-9 (page 188) shows the number of Bank Street College graduates who were matched in the NYC DOE human resources database by school year.

Table A-6. Human Resources Data Received from NYC DOE

Variable name	Variable description
Bank Street	Flag for Bank Street College graduates
EISN	Seven-digit employee identification number
Last Name	Employee's last name
First Name	Employee's first name
Birth Date	Employee's date of birth
Sex	Employee's gender
Ethnicity	Employee's ethnicity
License Code	Four-character code indicating the type of license the employee is working under
License Category	Two-character code indicating the license category the employee is working under
License Subject	Two-character code indicating the subject that the employee is licensed under
Assignment Code	Four-character code indicating the content area assignment of the employee at the NYC DOE
PMS Status	Three-character code from the HR Hub indicating a employee's active status (e.g., regular active)
Title Code	Five-character code indicating the employee's position at the NYC DOE
Total Active Years	Total years employee has been active at the NYC DOE
Resp District	Two-digit code for the district where the employee was assigned
Borough School	Four-character code of the borough where the employee was assigned
School Level	Two-digit code indicating the school level that the employee was assigned
School Code	Four-character code of the school where the employee was assigned
Certification Category	Two-character code indicating the NY State certification category under which the employee was certified
Certification Area	Four-digit code indicating specific areas in which the employee was certified
Certification Type	Description of the type of NY State certification the employee was holding
Issue Date	Issue date of the NY State certification held by the employee
Expiration Date	Expiration date of the NY State certification held by the employee

Note. We received additional data from the NYC DOE. This table includes only key teacher variables related to our analyses.

Table A-7. Student Data Received from NYC DOE

Variable name	Variable description	Grades	Years
Student ID	Non-personally identifiable student tracking number	PK–12	2002–2012
School ID	School identification number	PK–12	2002–2012
Birth Date	Date of birth	PK–12	2002–2012
Grade	Grade	PK–12	2002–2012
Sex	Gender	PK–12	2002–2012
Ethnicity	Ethnicity	PK–12	2002–2012
Meal Code	Free/reduced-price meal status	PK–12	2002–2012
Home Language	Primary language spoken in the home	PK–12	2002–2012
Special Education	Special education status	PK–12	2002–2012
School Level	School level	PK–12	2002–2012
Grade Code	Three-digit numeric code indicating grade level and classroom type (e.g., General Education or Transitional Bilingual)	PK–12	2002–2012
Register	Register status (e.g., active or discharged)	3–8	1999–2012
ELL	English Language Learner status	3–8	1999–2012
Absence	Number of days absent from school that year	3–8	1999–2012
Presence	Number of days present at school that year	3–8	1999–2012
ELA Code	English Language Art (ELA) test code (State vs. City test)	3–8	1999–2012
ELA Grade	Grade level of ELA test taken by student	3–8	1999–2012
ELA Scores	ELA test scores (raw score, scale score, and performance level)	3–8	1999–2012
Math Code	Math test code (State vs. City test)	3–8	1999–2012
Math Grade	Grade level of ELA test taken by student	3–8	1999–2012
Math Scores	Math test scores (raw score, scale score, and performance level)	3–8	1999–2012
Science Test Scores	Science test scores (raw score, scaled score, and proficiency level)	4, 8	2010, 2011
NYS ESLAT Scores	New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test scores for four parts: reading, writing, speaking, and listening, as well as the overall proficiency level for NYSESLAT	3–8	2003–2011
Courses and Credits	All of the courses the student was enrolled in for that year	6–12	1999–2012
LAB-R Scores	Test raw scores for Language Assessment Battery—Revised	K–12	2002–2011

Note. We received additional data from the NYC DOE. This table includes only key variables in student data.

Table A-8. Number of Students Linked to Teachers in Data Provided by NYC DOE

School year	Subject	n of NYC teachers linked to students	n of students linked to teachers	n of schools with students and teachers linked
2005–2006	ELA	12,217	316,637	1,040
2006–2007	ELA	11,844	308,164	1,046
2007–2008	ELA	11,204	307,464	1,093
2008–2009	ELA	11,301	324,328	1,110
2009–2010	ELA	11,331	330,643	1,126
2010–2011	ELA	13,701	357,035	1,137
2011–2012	ELA	8,336	259,099	1,002
2005–2006	Math	11,731	316,639	1,041
2006–2007	Math	11,462	308,879	1,049
2007–2008	Math	10,897	311,215	1,094
2008–2009	Math	10,945	325,585	1,139
2009–2010	Math	10,976	330,678	1,126
2010–2011	Math	13,361	357,408	1,181
2011–2012	Math	8,171	262,161	1,003

Table A-9. Number of Students Linked to Teachers in Data Provided by NYC DOE

Year	n of Bank Street graduates who are NYC DOE teachers	n of non-Bank Street graduates who are NYC DOE teachers
1998–1999	248	58,434
1999–2000	281	60,256
2000–2001	360	64,552
2001–2002	428	63,542
2002–2003	507	66,137
2003–2004	621	73,937
2004–2005	671	74,381
2005–2006	723	75,690
2006–2007	732	76,621
2007–2008	742	77,404
2008–2009	710	77,300
2009–2010	661	75,500
2010–2011	594	73,772
2011–2012	539	72,495

Data and Sample Selection for Value-Added Modeling Analyses

Our value-added modeling (VAM) analyses focused on examining whether graduating from a Bank Street teaching program is a significant predictor of student achievement gains on New York State English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics (math) exams. Put another way, we were interested in the influence of teachers who graduated from Bank Street teaching programs on students' state test scores compared to teachers who did not graduate from Bank Street.

While the NYC DOE was able to flag Bank Street graduates in 14 years of historical NYC DOE human resources data, it could provide us with only 7 years of teacher–student linked data (from SY2005–06 through SY2011–12). Prior to SY2005–06, New York State standardized tests were administered only to students in grades 4 and 8; in SY2005–06 state tests expanded to grades 3–8 in ELA and math. We were provided teacher–student linkage data only for grades 4–8, but we used grade 3 test scores as a control for prior student achievement. We performed all VAM analyses separately for ELA and math.

Further, while we received 7 years of teacher–student linked data from the NYC DOE, we were unfortunately able to use only 5 years of data for our analyses. The NYC DOE used a process to verify the accuracy of the student–teacher linkage data for SY2005–06 through SY2009–10, but did not verify data for SY2010–11. Documentation from the NYC DOE cautions that data for SY2010–11 should not be used for research projects or evaluation purposes. For this reason, we decided not to include the data for SY2010–11 in our analyses. Additionally, the teacher–student linkage data for SY2011–12 has a dramatic decrease in sample size compared to other school years, and including these data would have given us nonconsecutive years of data in our master dataset. For these reasons, we also decided not to include the data from SY2011–12 in our analyses. We combined the remaining 5 consecutive years of data (SY2005–06 through SY2009–10) into one master longitudinal dataset. Using a 5-year longitudinal dataset, rather than performing analyses by year, allowed us to develop more solid indicators of student academic propensities, as well as model teacher effectiveness in a more sophisticated way by taking into account a teacher's history of supporting student achievement.

To avoid confounding results, we excluded students who were taught by co-teachers in a given school year (i.e., students who were taught ELA or math by more than one teacher in the same school year). We also excluded students in self-contained special education classrooms because the New York State standardized tests are grade-specific and consequently do not accurately measure the achievement of students far below grade level. Additionally, more random error is introduced when estimating the contribution of teachers who have substantial numbers of special education students in their classroom as compared to teachers who teach in a general education classroom with only a few or no special education students (McCaffrey &

Buzick, 2014). Across the 5 school years represented in our master dataset, approximately 8% of students are members of self-contained special education classrooms and were excluded from our dataset.

In our dataset, we have some teachers who are linked to only a few students, while others are linked to more than 40 students in a given year. Similarly, the number of teachers linked to schools varies widely. For these reasons, we thought it was inappropriate for us to use hierarchical linear modeling with students nested within classrooms and classrooms nested within schools. Instead, we decided to use individual students as the unit of analysis in our models.

Ultimately, our final dataset includes 5 consecutive school years (SY2005–06 through SY2009–10) of data for teachers linked to students in grades 4–8 in general education classrooms. Across these 5 years, we identified 322 teachers as graduates of Bank Street teaching programs. Of these, the NYC DOE designated 210 as having taught students both ELA and math, 74 as having taught only ELA, and 38 as having taught only math.

Student Outcome Measures and Predictor Variables

The measures used to examine teachers' value-added to student achievement are student-level state standardized test scores in ELA and math for grades 4–8. Because the New York standardized test scores are not measured on a consistent scale across grade levels and across years, we normalized the raw test scores within each grade level with a min–max normalization method.

Although the New York State tests do not allow us to calculate gain scores,³ we can use prior years' scores on the tests (along with other indicators of prior academic performance) as controls when modeling influences on achievement. Based on multiple years of data provided by the NYC DOE, we developed longitudinal data sets with students matched to teachers by year; this allows us to model teacher influences on student achievement, while controlling for student background characteristics and prior achievement scores. The student background characteristics we controlled for in our models include: gender, ethnicity, free/reduced-price lunch status, English Language Learner (ELL) status, special education status,⁴ grade level, attendance, and retention. Students' attendance in a school year and prior test scores are continuous variables; all others are categorical variables.

³ Gain scores cannot be calculated because we have students' scores on annual state tests rather than pre- and posttest scores. The state tests are grade specific and measure student competency on different content from one year to the next.

⁴ Because we removed students in self-contained special education classrooms, only a small percentage of students left in our dataset are designated with a special education status. Those remaining are students with a special education designation assigned to a general education classroom.

Our two key predictor variables of interest were: 1) having a Bank Street College (BSC) graduate for a teacher, and 2) each teacher's years of teaching experience. The BSC variable has two categories: a) students taught by BSC graduates, and b) students taught by non-BSC graduates. We transformed the years of teaching experience variable from a continuous to a categorical variable with two categories: students with beginning teachers (defined as having fewer than 2 years of teaching experience), and students with experienced teachers (defined as having 2 or more years of teaching experience).

Before conducting the VAM analyses with our longitudinal master dataset, we ran hierarchical regression models on data from individual school years to ensure that the results made sense and that there was not drastic variation between years. Table A-10 demonstrates the sample sizes by school year. The yearly cross-sectional regression models indicate that student demographic variables, attendance, and prior test achievement account for a stable and substantial proportion of the variance of student standardized test performance. The student background characteristics account for 63% to 70% of the variance in students' ELA performance across the different years and account for 65% to 72% of the variance in students' math test scores across the 5 years. In the annual models, the BSC graduate status and teaching experience variables together account for only between 1–2% of the variance in student achievement performance in ELA and math. In other words, when we ran the models separately by school year, very little to none of the variation in test scores among students can be explained by their having a BSC graduate for a teacher. In this report, we describe the results of our final models when we combined the 5 years of data.

Table A-10. Numbers of Linked Teacher and Students by Year for BSC and Non-BSC Graduates

Year	ELA				Math			
	BSC graduates		Non-BSC graduates		BSC graduates		Non-BSC graduates	
	n of teachers	n of students	n of teachers	n of students	n of teachers	n of students	n of teachers	n of students
2005–06	132	3,679	8,983	286,028	124	3,601	8,538	285,445
2006–07	124	3,612	8,732	277,206	103	2,734	8,387	278,469
2007–08	129	4,144	8,734	279,204	104	3,147	8,436	283,925
2008–09	118	3,614	8,818	295,491	88	2,445	8,547	297,821
2009–10	108	3,404	8,898	298,342	80	2,181	8,642	299,738
5-year total	611	18,453	44,165	1,436,271	499	14,108	42,550	1,445,398

Challenges in Measuring the Value-Added of Bank Street Teachers

We earlier described some of the challenges we faced in obtaining survey participation from Bank Street graduates. We also had challenges in finding appropriate data to measure the value-added to student achievement of Bank Street graduates. We provide these notes so that the reader will be appropriately cautious when interpreting the results of our value-added analyses. As we describe below, the sample we use is in many ways not a representative sample of Bank Street graduates—it's simply the best sample available. Here are the chief limitations of our data set:

- Principally, this study is based solely on graduates working in the NYC DOE, and we cannot know the degree to which Bank Street graduates employed in the district are representative of the population of graduates as a whole.
- Due to the availability of data, our sample represents only Bank Street graduates who have taught in NYC DOE noncharter schools in grades 4–8 general education classrooms from SY2005–06 through SY2009–10.
- Of particular concern is the limitation to grades 4–8 because most Bank Street graduates completed teacher preparation programs focused on early childhood or early elementary grades. Relatively few were prepared in middle school programs.
- Many of the graduates in our data sample appear to be subject-specific teachers, i.e., their students of record were tested in either ELA or math, but not both. This type of assignment is not typical for Bank Street graduates.
- Many Bank Street graduates completed teacher preparation programs focused on teaching in special education settings, but we removed teachers who teach self-contained special education classes.
- While we were able to flag Bank Street graduates teaching in the NYC DOE from SY1998–99 through SY2011–12, we were ultimately able to use only data for 5 consecutive years (SY2005–06 through SY2009–10) in our analyses.

While we do not have reason to believe that Bank Street graduates who have taught outside of NYC DOE, in charter/private schools, in grades other than 4–8, before SY2005–06 or after SY2009–10, with a co-teacher, or in self-contained special education classes are more or less effective than the graduates represented in our sample, we still caution against generalizing these results beyond the population of teachers actually represented in the sample. The bottom line is that the Bank Street

College teaching programs have had 4,979 graduates over the past 14 years and, for the various reasons described above, only 322 (6.5%) of them are represented in our final sample. Finally, it should be noted that we did not exclude teachers (e.g., those who teach in charter or private schools or schools outside of the NYC DOE) intentionally for theoretical reasons. They were excluded simply because data were not available.

In addition, we acknowledge, more broadly, the appropriate cautions that scholars, policy makers, practitioners, and the public should apply on the use of value-added modeling for educational assessments and accountability, particularly for consequential decisions. As noted by the recent policy statement of the American Statistical Association (2014), a policy brief by the Economic Policy Institute (Baker et al., 2010), and numerous others in the field,⁵ the complex nature of this type of research and analysis requires scholars, practitioners, and policy makers to proceed with due caution acknowledging the instability and biases associated with the method.

⁵ See Briggs and Domingue (2011); Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, and Rothstein (2012); Haertel (2013); Lockwood et al (2007); Loeb and Candelaria (2012); McCaffrey (2013); Newton, Darling-Hammond, Haertel, and Thomas (2010); Raudenbush (2014); Raudenbush and Willms (1995); Rothstein (2007); and Sass (2008).

Part 3: Case Study Design and Methods

The purpose of this study's two school-level and one classroom-level case studies is to share vivid descriptions of the practices of Bank Street graduates and, to the degree possible, consider the influences of those practices on students' opportunities for learning. Our effort for this set of case studies focused on trying to understand the influence of a Bank Street education on the teaching of the college's graduates and to describe key features of their practice and its relationship to the Bank Street approach. Broadly, this effort seeks to answer the question: What does the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach (the Bank Street approach) look like in practice?

Toward this end, our research encompassed five broad and iterative processes that guided us through the development of the report:

1. We identified appropriate contexts for data collection.
2. We built a framework for observation and data-gathering.
3. We collected evidence in service of the case study write-ups via observations and interviews.
4. We analyzed the data using the Bank Street approach as a frame for analysis.
5. We analyzed the data using a grounded-theory approach to identify additional relevant themes
6. We engaged in a collaborative effort to put the dominant themes and data together into a series of coherent case studies.

In examining our research question, two intersecting ideas guided our work: First, we recognized that each case study would display particular variations of the Bank Street approach, as high-quality practice will always be shaped and influenced by the particulars of the local context and conditions. Second, we were interested in exploring iterations of the Bank Street approach that occurred in schools where there was an established "footprint" of Bank Street's presence. To this end, we examined teachers' practice in three schools with close ties and connections to Bank Street, presuming that such schools would provide the best context within which Bank Street graduates would be afforded the opportunity to engage in practices resonant with their preparation. For the purposes of the study "close ties" included:

- Significant presence of Bank Street graduates in the school;
- School leadership focus that encourages meaningful connections to Bank Street College and articulates a sympathetic alignment to the Bank Street approach; and
- A meaningful and ongoing structural relationship to Bank Street. This could include serving as a placement site for student teachers, participation in professional development activities, and/or a history of other initiatives connecting the school and the college.

Additionally, our research team was interested in exploring contexts with these types of deep connections to Bank Street to evaluate the cumulative effects of school-wide practices in settings potentially aligned with and supportive of the Bank Street approach.

Data collection entailed a combination of interviews (teachers and school leaders), review of school documents and other artifacts, and extensive onsite visits and classroom observations, typically over the course of a full week or two. In simple terms, these were the overarching questions that guided our work:

1. What does the practice of Bank Street graduates look like in the classroom?
2. In what ways is the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach in evidence at the classroom and the school level?
3. How is the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach being adapted in this particular context?

The Bank Street Developmental-Interaction Approach

Our lens for the case study observations and other data collection was the Bank Street developmental-interaction approach (the Bank Street approach), an approach to teaching, learning, and teacher development that can trace its roots to a Progressive Era movement that began in the early 20th century. The Bank Street approach was conceived, in large part, in the work of progressive educator Lucy Sprague Mitchell who founded what was originally called The Bureau of Educational Experiments. Her vision was that the Bureau would be a laboratory that would be staffed by teachers, psychologists, and researchers whose collaborative work would create and study environments in which children grew and learned to their full potential, and to educate teachers and others how to create these environments.

The transition to Bank Street occurred in 1931 as a result of a series of meetings between Mitchell and leaders of a network of progressive private schools who approached her with the idea of creating a cooperative teacher preparation program (Grinberg, 2005). The impetus for this proposal emerged because, according to progressive school leaders of private school in Manhattan at the time, such as the Walden School, City and Country School, and the Ethical Culture School, “Normal schools and universities did a poor job preparing teachers” (p. 13). These progressive school leaders believed that teachers graduating from traditional programs had been acculturated to an idea of teaching that emphasized narrow methods and prescriptive practice and were not open to approaches anchored in child development, social justice, and the social context of children and schooling. Mitchell was enthusiastic about the teacher preparation project and the first cohort began in 1931–32.

Mitchell’s mission was to develop a program that prepared teachers to undertake teaching as an endeavor fusing the systematic methods of a scientist with the creative, open-mindedness of an artist. In 1931, she articulated the overarching principles guiding the new school in an article written in the journal *Progressive Education*.

Our aim is to turn out teachers whose attitude toward their work and toward life is scientific. To us, this means an attitude of eager, alert observation; a constant questioning of old procedure in the light of new observations; a use of the world, as well as of books, as source material; an experimental open-mindedness, and an effort to keep as reliable records as the situation permits, in order to base the future upon accurate knowledge of what has been done.

Our aim is equally to turn out students whose attitude toward their work and towards life is that of the artist. To us, this means an attitude of relish, of emotional drive, a genuine participation in some creative phase of work, and a sense that joy and beauty are legitimate possessions of all human beings, young and old. If we can produce teachers with an experimental, critical, and ardent approach to their work, we are ready to leave the future of education to them (Mitchell, 1931, p. 251).

Mitchell’s original vision of teaching still guides and animates the Bank Street approach to the preparation of teachers. In a 2007 concept paper on the progressive ideals of teacher preparation, longtime Bank Street faculty members Nancy Nager and Edna Shapiro contend that the approach developed by Mitchell and her colleagues remains central to the work of Bank Street: “The breadth of Mitchell’s synthesis, her capacity to inspire others with her vision, and the heuristic framework she helped shape may be at least partly responsible for the remarkable durability of key ideas” (p. 8). They identify five key principles that continue to guide Bank Street’s approach to the “teaching of teachers.”

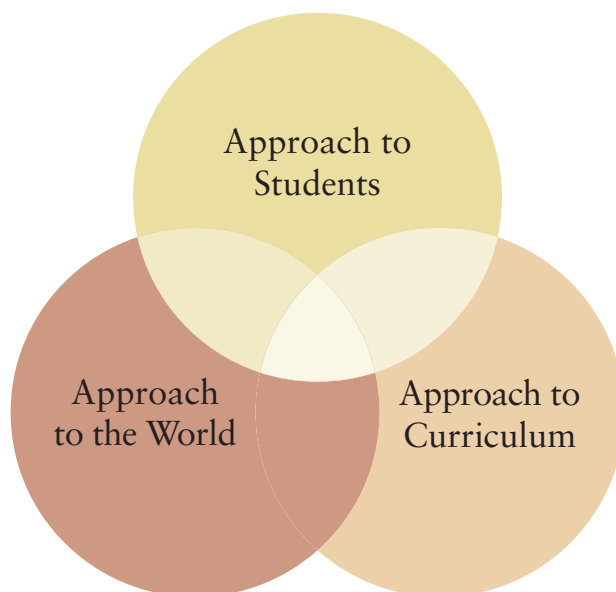
1. Education is a vehicle for creating and promoting social justice and encouraging participation in democratic processes.
2. The teacher has a deep knowledge of subject matter areas and is actively engaged in learning through formal study, direct observation, and participation.
3. Understanding children's learning and development in the context of family, community, and culture is needed for teaching.
4. The teacher continues to grow as a person and as a professional.
5. Teaching requires a philosophy of education—a view of learning and the learner, knowledge and knowing—which informs all elements of teaching (Nager and Shapiro, 2007, p. 9).

This conception of teaching and learning instantiated and fostered at Bank Street has come to be known as the “developmental-interaction approach,” or more popularly, as “the Bank Street approach.” The developmental-interaction approach “recognizes that children learn best when they are actively engaged both intellectually and emotionally with materials, ideas and people” (Bank Street College of Education, 2014f). Educators who embrace the developmental-interaction approach to teaching recognize that students’ development unfolds at varying paces and through interaction with the world. The classroom is regarded as a space that would

strengthen the child’s competence to deal effectively with the environment; encourage the development of autonomy and the construction of a sense of self; promote the integration of functions—that is, thought and feeling, feeling and action—and stimulate individuality and vigorous, creative response (Shapiro and Nager, 2000, p. 22).

For the purpose of these case studies, we reviewed a wide range of materials and interviewed a number of experienced Bank Street faculty and graduates in an effort to distill the Bank Street approach into a framework or lens that would help to guide data collection, analysis, and writing, while grounding our understanding of the Bank Street approach within classroom practice. We describe our findings here, recognizing that a vision originally articulated nearly a century ago would be shaped and reshaped by the diverse array of individuals who engage with it. There is no one perfect way to describe or instantiate a philosophy held, shared, and exemplified by a diverse array of individuals over a long period of history.

Accordingly, the lens we used in conducting these cases studies was “the Bank Street approach,” distilled here as an interrelated and integrated approach to students, approach to curriculum, and approach to the world:



Approach to Students

We defined the “Bank Street approach to students” as one that is:

- Founded first and foremost on knowing individual student’s strengths, interest, and needs;
- Developmentally oriented and grounded;
- Committed to the notion that student growth is fostered by interaction with materials and the world around them;
- Based on building strong connections and relationships with individual students;
- Founded on a broad level of and orientation to inclusivity;
- Intent on taking students seriously, seeing students as active learners, makers of meaning, and researchers of their worlds; and
- Aware of the social, cultural, and individual nature of development.

Approach to Curriculum

We defined the “Bank Street approach to curriculum” as one that is:

- Broad-based, but with special and particular attention and depth in the social studies;
- Encouraging of long-term, student-centered projects and other extended explorations of topics and subjects;
- Interdisciplinary, with emphasis on engagement with and integration of the arts;
- “Constructivist” in its orientation, providing students opportunities to help shape and drive curricular and instructional choices;
- Centered around both the learner and learning; and
- Focused on the learning process to arrive at desired outcomes.

Approach to the World

We defined the “Bank Street approach to the world” as one that is:

- Founded firmly within the tradition of progressive education, governance, and social values;
- Oriented toward meaningful connections to the family, community, and larger world;
- Encouraging of children and teachers to take up questions and issues of justice and equity in their work;
- Committed to the notion that schools should be in service of a more equitable and just society; and
- Supportive of teachers as collaborative professionals, robust decision-makers, lifelong learners, and politically engaged and oriented.

The Case Studies

The results of these efforts are reported in **three case studies** of the Bank Street approach in practice:

- *Learning to Play, Playing to Learn: The Bank Street Developmental-Interaction Approach in Liliana’s Kindergarten Classroom* is an in-depth classroom-level case study of a Bank Street graduate whose work embodies the developmental-interaction approach in practice.
- *Artful Teaching and Learning: The Bank Street Developmental-Interaction Approach at Midtown West School* explores instantiations of the Bank Street approach at both the classroom and school levels.
- *A School Growing Roots: The Bank Street Developmental-Interaction Approach at Community Roots Charter School* also explores instantiations of the Bank Street approach at both the classroom and school levels.

The first case study offers an in depth look the practice of “Liliana,” a Bank Street alumna and kindergarten teacher at Brooklyn New School, a diverse public elementary school with longstanding ties to Bank Street. Liliana’s teaching is emblematic of the Bank Street graduates whose classrooms we observed, and it highlights the Bank Street approach in the context of a particular classroom. The second and third cases look across multiple classrooms and report descriptively on the cumulative influence at the school level of the clustering of Bank Street graduates, connections with the college, and alignment with its approach orientations. These cases report on the practices of Bank Street graduates at Midtown West School, located in Manhattan’s theater district, and Community Roots Charter School, located in the Fort Green neighborhood in Brooklyn.

The School Sites

1. Brooklyn New School

Founded in 1987, Brooklyn New School is an elementary school serving approximately 650 students from pre-kindergarten through fifth grade (90 students in each grade, nearly 30 students per class). Brooklyn New School shares a building with its sister middle and high school, the Brooklyn School for Collaborative Studies, founded in 2001. The student body is diverse, with 2012–13 enrollment: 38% White; 29% African American; 24% Hispanic or Latino; 7% Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander; and 2% multiracial. Approximately 28% of the students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and 29% of the students were eligible for special education services (New York State Education Department, 2014b).

Brooklyn New School was founded by a group of teachers and parents who wanted an alternative school in the Red Hook neighborhood of Brooklyn that adhered to the following characteristics (Brooklyn New School, 2014). A school...

- With a racial, ethnic, and economic balance
- Where children [are] engaged in active learning
- Where children of different skill levels work together
- Where parents are involved in their child's education

2. Midtown West School

Established in 1989, Midtown West School is a New York City public elementary school, serving approximately 350 students from kindergarten through fifth grade (60 students in each grade, nearly 30 students per class). The student body is diverse, with 2012–13 enrollment: 49% White; 22% Hispanic or Latino; 10% Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacifica Islander; 9% African American; and 9% multiracial). Approximately 28% of the students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and 16% of the students were eligible for special education services (Source: New York State Education Department, 2014c).

The school was established as an alternative, small school of choice in a collaborative effort among a group of motivated and involved parents in partnership with Bank Street College. Their joint aim was to develop a progressive school of choice modeled on the Bank Street approach with an emphasis on developmentally-oriented curriculum and instruction, a prominent role for the social studies and the arts, and integrated, project based learning.

3. Community Roots Charter School

Founded in 2006, Community Roots Charter School is an elementary school serving approximately 300 students from kindergarten through grade five (50 students in each grade). In fall 2012, Community Roots expanded to include a middle school at another location, beginning with 50 sixth graders and expanding by a grade each year. The student body is diverse, with 2012–13 enrollment: 42% White; 38% African American; 10% Hispanic or Latino; 6% multiracial; and 3% Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacifica Islander). Approximately 31% of the students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and 20% of the students were eligible for special education services (Source: New York State Education Department, 2014a).

According to the school's administrators, the following serve as the animating, guiding principles of Community Roots:

- Curricular focus, with an emphasis on social studies, embodied in deep, engaging and extended “integrated studies” units, capped by a community shared “culmination” experience;
- Commitment to inclusion, instantiated in a staffing model that includes an integrated co-teaching model (ICT) in each class, and a significant set of staffing resources to meet the needs of a wide range of learners with special needs; and
- Focus on diversity, family, and community that bridges the home, school, and the wider community in the education of the school’s students and in an effort to have the school make an impact on the wider world.

For more extended descriptions of the case study school sites, see the published case studies as cited above, available at <https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/publications/pubs/1387>.

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